

# COLLEGE ENGLISH

Vol. 1

NOVEMBER 1939

No. 2

---

JOHN PHILLIPS MARQUAND

HARLAN HATCHER<sup>1</sup>

John P. Marquand is an unusual figure in contemporary letters. His career has developed in reverse. Although he had been writing continuously and publishing regularly since 1921, his name was not among the horde of authors given pictorial and biographical treatment in *Living Authors* (1931) and *Authors Today and Yesterday* (1933). This omission, of course, does not signify that he was unknown or unread. As a matter of fact he had a huge public, but not of the right people to support a literary reputation. They were the readers of the big-circulation magazines, many of whom bought their copies of the *Saturday Evening Post*, particularly in 1935 and 1936, because J. P. Marquand was appearing in its pages with such serials as *No Hero* and short stories like "You Can't Do That," "What's It Get You?" "Hang It on the Horn," "No One Ever Would," etc. Possibly not many readers suspected that these pot-boilers were fashioned by a master-craftsman who had already lit a brave fire under the prime meat and savory herbs of traditional Boston and was about to arrive in 1938 as a Pulitzer Prize winner with his graceful satire, *The Late George Apley*, one of the happiest awards ever made by that unpredictable committee.

We are unaccustomed to sequences like this. We all know, from

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hatcher, a professor of English at Ohio State University, is an author and critic of note, some of his better-known works being *Tunnel Hill* and *Patterns of Wolves* (novels) and *Creating the American Novel*. He has written critical articles for the *English Journal* on drama in verse and on Eliot, MacLeish, Anderson, and other contemporary writers.

hearing it repeated in season and out, that the trouble with American literature is Hollywood and the American magazines. A promising author writes his heart out in two or three novels on which he averages, if he is lucky, a thousand dollars each. The reviewers praise him as the greatest writer since Melville and his last novel as the masterpiece of the generation, and predict a career at least as fruitful as that of Dickens and Dostoievsky. There the blight hits him. A big magazine takes his stories, and he gets his eye on the fat budgets of the movies. He buys a Connecticut farm, increases his scale of living, loses his artistic independence, and begins to do pieces to formula for the smooths and Hollywood. He rationalizes his sins by telling himself and his friends that as soon as he has made enough money to guarantee his security, he will do the great American novel that is consuming his artistic soul. He never does. He goes soft, loses his grip, and fades from the scene as another competent hack trying to keep up the style of living to which he has now grown accustomed.

The sorry part of the story is its truth. We shall not call names, but a dozen could be mentioned offhand. John P. Marquand is the man in a million. When he found that he could write stories that editors would buy consistently enough to guarantee him a living, he chucked his job as an advertising-copy writer and plunged. And as soon as he had won his security, he wrote his big novel. But there is no pretense about him. He is not literary in the sissy sense of the word, and he claims no masterpieces among the world's fiction. He has been making his living by working at his calling the same as any other honest man. For sixteen years he did a job of writing, and he did it well. He knew that one of the biggest demands upon an author is that he learn his trade, and that if he doesn't learn a few of the fundamentals he will be seriously handicapped, no matter how much genius he may have. Witness Thomas Wolfe. Marquand mastered the craftsmanship of fiction-writing in the competitive market place of the editorial offices and the newsstands. The fact that his "Good Morning, Major" was included in *Best Short Stories of 1927*, that his "Deep Water" was one of the O. Henry Memorial Award prize stories for 1932, and that his "You Can't Do That" and "Put Those Things Away" were in the *Post Stories* for 1935 and 1936, respec-

tively, shows to what distinction he attained in this field. These stories are admirable from any legitimate standards, and tribute is due the author for his skill in preserving so high a level of technical and literary excellence without alienating the middle and lower intellectual brackets who provide the big circulations.

But in learning how to be a successful practitioner of magazine fiction Mr. Marquand, by the expectancy charts of literary careers, should have become incapable of serious books. Yet, in *The Late George Apley* and in *Wickford Point* he has produced novels that would honor any season or any decade in American fiction. He has, in fact, kept his promise to himself to write what he wanted to without an eye to serial publication as soon as his production in the magazine field would allow him the luxury. It is pleasant to remember that *The Late George Apley*, published in January, 1937, not only made a genuine literary reputation for its author, but rewarded him handsomely; and that *Wickford Point* was a best seller of 1939. There is no reason to despair of a general reading public that makes a best seller of such volumes.

Delaware claims Mr. Marquand among its honored men of letters because he was born in Wilmington, November 10, 1893. The claim is tenuous, however, because Marquand was brought up in New York City and in Newburyport, Massachusetts, where he attended high school. He was educated at Harvard, where he was on the editorial board of the *Lampoon*. He graduated in 1915, just as the Cambridge and Boston of the pre-war era took the shock of the exploding world and went down before the jazz age. He worked on the *Boston Transcript*, and then went to the Mexican border with the Massachusetts National Guard in 1916. Later he saw plenty of action overseas at the front as a first lieutenant in the field artillery in the Marne-Aisne, St. Mihiel, and Meuse-Argonne offensives. His first wife was from Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Since he gave up newspaper work and went in for writing, he has divided his time between Boston, Newburyport, and New York City, with time out for two visits to the Orient from which, like his New England seamen of old, he brought back a rich shipment of his own brand of goods: *Ming Yellow* (1935) with its vivid and accurate picture of the Chinese and the Chinese countryside; the delightful oriental smoothy of various

mystery-adventure stories, Mr. Moto; and the thrilling story of the stranded aviator and the spies of Tokyo and Shanghai in *No Hero*. He served as a trustee of the Boston Athenaeum and was a member of the board of the Community Health Association of Boston. His publishers are Little, Brown and Company of Beacon Street, Boston. He has been intimate enough with this ancient province of the Republic to have its elusive character in his blood, and he has been detached from it just enough to be able to see its archaisms with amusing irony.

Mr. Marquand's preparation for the sensationally successful New England novels has unfolded with the naturalness of predestination. His personal associations with the place, begun at the proper age, his native talent, and his years of practice in the art of writing, all come to a focus in these two books. Each element is about equally important. Of the necessity of an author knowing his New England at first hand, and from his great-grandfather up, Mr. Marquand has spoken with sentimental and satirical firmness in *Wickford Point* in the diverting scenes between the native Jim Calder and the interloper from Minnesota, Dr. Allen Southby, now of Martin House, Harvard, who proposes a novel on the Wickford Valley. Like Jim Calder, Marquand knows the place. Newburyport itself has dumped its ancient cargoes of mood, romance, and colorful characters on the docks of his writing table, and he has delivered them as packaged goods to the big magazines for the pleasure of a million readers. You can see the impressionable high-school boy absorbing the atmosphere of this once thriving seaport town, and the mature man and artist re-creating the famous shipyards of the Newburyport clippers along the Merrimac River where the forlorn brick factories now crowd the shore and the sandbars stick out of the water where the sailing vessels from the world-ports were once so thick that they formed a bridge across to Salisbury. This Massachusetts town that launched one hundred and seven ships in the sixty years before 1741, that built the packets to carry the forty-niners to California, and that received the wealth of China and the Indies at its port, is the scene, in whole or in part, and specifically or by implication, of many of his short stories and novels from *The Unspeakable Gentleman* (1922) to *Wickford Point* (1939).



Among the immaturities natural to a young man's first novel, *The Unspeakable Gentleman* has some excellent passages on Newburyport people and houses with which the skilled author of *Wickford Point* might well be content. *Lord Timothy Dexter* (1925) is a salty and adroit biography of that Newburyport eccentric who styled himself "First in the East, First in the West, and the Greatest Philosopher of All the Known World." It is one of Marquand's best books and shows his keen interest in the magnificent days of the great shipowners and captains. Timothy was the self-made Lord who beat his wife for restraint in weeping at the rehearsal for his funeral, who cluttered his yard with statues of the great, including one of himself, who actually sent coals to Newcastle, and shipped warming pans and mittens to the Indies where, to the astonishment of his neighbors who thought him a fool, they were eagerly bought. Mr. Marquand, whose gay style is adequate for most of his needs, lets Timothy tell of this episode in his own lordly spelling and syntax: one more spect—Drole a Nuf—I Dreamed of warming pans three nites, that they would doue in the west inges; I got no more than forty two thousand—put them in nine vessels, for difrent ports, that tuk good hold. I cleared siventyn nine per sent. The pans they made yous of them for Coucking—"very good, masser, for Coukey—blessed good in Deade, missey; got nise handel; Now burn my fase, the best thing I Ever see in borne days."

Lord Timothy's house is still standing at 201 High Street, a street nationally famous as the best surviving example of federal architecture—those big, hip-roofed, three-storied square houses built for the shipowners, and symbolizing in our small age the mighty giants of those days. The Dexter house with its wood-incased chimneys, its watchtower surmounted by a gilded eagle, and its columns flanking the door are affectionately described by Mr. Marquand in a paragraph which will serve, incidentally, to illustrate the author's style as it was forming fifteen years ago.

Though it is square with an utterly correct squareness, and possesses the conventional cupola and portico, it somehow lacks that repression and chasteness of line from which was born the jig-saw and scroll work age of subsequent revolt. There is a distinctive gaiety in its Georgian decoration, and a defiant merry lilt to its portico and windows, hard to explain, but none the less apparent. The agency which achieves it is the somewhat startling presence on the cupola of a large gold eagle, slightly out of proportion to the building where he perches.

.... His great gold wings, not outspread and yet not folded, have a jaunty angle, and there is a defiance and fresh hope in the breast and beak of that venerable bird which a century of New England weather has been incapable of quelling. .... Though of gilded wood he has a compelling presence, for once you set an eye upon him, the whole house seems like his pedestal, all built especially for him. You perceive it is not the house but the eagle upon his lonely perch which gives the impression of vivacity and pretentiousness, and renders a quiet spot eccentric in its own fashion.

It was only natural that Mr. Marquand should make full use of the adventurous ships and men and of the full-flavored traditions of the old families and the code they lived by when he began his career as a writer for the magazines. In both *Lord Timothy Dexter* and *Black Cargo*, also published in 1925, he wrote more to satisfy himself than to please editors and their subscription list. Both books were well received in critical circles, but, as Mr. Marquand himself says, the effort "to reconcile the demands of magazine fiction with the type of writing not sought for by the popular magazines" was not successful, and he postponed further serious work in this vein until he could be indifferent to serial publication. That is to say, he adapted his matter and his style of writing to the limitations inherent in big-circulation magazines with heavy advertising.

There is no reason for anybody to be high hat about this. Marquand has succeeded in story after story in conforming to the conventional demands of the plot story on the plane of mechanical form and at the same time has transcended these limitations, or used them as a means toward the creation of bona fide character. "Deep Water," a *Saturday Evening Post* story, is a good example. As Harry Hansen properly noted in recommending it for the O. Henry Memorial Award volume of 1932, "it realizes the author's intention, creates an atmosphere, holds a point of view, and is a well-rounded work." And Blanche Colton Williams, with her usual keen insight, praises Marquand's "high regard for style, for workmanship," and notes:

Within the limitations determined [by the author] the story reflects the true reactions of the characters. "Deep Water" is built around, or grows from, the idea of "family"—in the connotation of the word that implies family honor, integrity, high-mindedness, with a devotion of all the members to these principles. The part of every character is subordinated to this fetish.

"Deep Water" is even more than this. It is a twelve-thousand-word preview of *Wickford Point*. Lee Dansel, who tells the story, is the Jim Calder of *Wickford Point*. Each is cousin to the family and lives at the ancestral house. Aunt Het of the story, "who could hear things in the silence, because she had lived there so long alone, as old maiden ladies do in New England houses from which everyone else has gone," is Aunt Sarah, and a little of Cousin Clothilde, of the novel. Bill, Phippen, and Sue Dansel are Harry, Sid, and Bella Brill—and the love of Sue for her cousin Lee is exactly paralleled by the love of Bella Brill for her cousin Jim Calder. Sam Crosby, the Detroit millionaire without family background, is suggestive of Howard Berg and others who hang around Bella Brill. The sense of family, of place, and of tradition is dominant in each, and certain passages could be transplanted from the story to the novel without even wilting a leaf.

"The chairs were standing as though expecting company which never came, but Aunt Het could tell exactly who had left everything in the West Room, beginning with John Dansel, who had built the house in 1783." Old mementoes lie about the house. The ivory dominoes belonged to Lee's grandfather; his great-grandfather brought home the china jar; the portrait over the mantelpiece is of Samuel Dansel staring down on the present generation

from an exotic age of love and violence and lace, red-haired, wavy-featured, and so like all of us that we seemed a parody of him. In spite of smoke-stained canvas, you could think of him standing in the room beside the table of San Domingo wood, when the Chippendale chairs were violently new, as restless as something in our blood, not made for work or order.

And in the moment of crisis the rigid family tradition of integrity lays firm hold on the Dansels and keeps them in line. Of course, "Deep Water" makes concessions to idealism which the more brittle *Wickford Point* can ignore.

The same general pattern with the motives of family tradition and rectitude may be found in many of Mr. Marquand's best things, but particular mention should be made of stories like "Hang It on the Horn" and other chronicles of the March family of shipowners and Chinese traders—Moses and his sons Robert, Thomas, and John—about whom are woven the legends of the romantic age of ships and

men at the turn of the last century. One of the notable stories of this series, "You Can't Do That," reprinted in the *Post Stories* of 1935, begins with a description of a cloak and helmet of red and yellow feathers that have hung in the hallway of the March house since the year 1806, and then tells how it was given to young John March by Kualai, chieftain on the Kona coast, after young John had forced the captain of his father's ship to deal honestly in trade with Kualai, whom he was about to cheat at the point of the ship's guns. The title is an expression of the family sense of honor.

"You see," Captain Griggs was saying "it isn't as though they were white people, Mr. March. More fools they, that's all."

Then John March found his voice. "Captain," he said, "this is a March ship. You don't leave until you've set those goods on shore. We don't do things that way, Captain. You can't—."

To this selected list of stories of family history, pointing toward his major work, must be added also *Warning Hill* (1930) and *Haven's End* (1933). In the light of his pronounced interest in New England family subjects it is certainly not surprising that when Mr. Marquand turned his eye away from the conventional demands of serialized fiction to write as he pleased, he chose the Apleys of Boston and the Brills of Wickford Point. He brought to these books the fruit of his years of ripening observation and experiments in snaring character traits, motives, and atmosphere. He was master of a graceful satire that is at once healthy, amusing, and humanly uncorrosive. In all technical matters relating to plot structure, economy of developing character, artistic control over every detail of the movement, however minute, and over the pace, the dialogue, the big scenes, and the crises, Marquand was expert. And he had attained complete dominance over the method of narrating a story in the first person from the point of view of an observer or active participant in the action without straining credulity or breaking the illusion, apparently subordinating him to his role as narrator but at the same time making him one of the most important characters in the *dramatis personae*. Mr. Willing, for example, who writes the memoir of the late George Apley, may be lost sight of during a first reading of that inimitable novel, but actually he is as much of a creation as Apley himself and embodies a grand oblique ribbing of the correct, old-



school, Boston clubman. One of his chief functions is to make naïve comments on his subject or to justify or explain his conduct while we sophisticates who do not share his reticences smile over his head, as when with abandoned frankness he decides to include a most discreet letter, but apologizes, "Normally it would not be quoted, and it is done so here at the risk of delicacy, to fulfill the writer's promise of holding nothing back. . . ." And Jim Calder, the novelist and cynical man of the world who tells the story of *Wickford Point* and keeps its tone at a sprightly level with his acid observations and comments, is a sound exhibit among the portraits of Mr. Marquand's war generation.

All of Mr. Marquand's immense skill as an artist is seen in its maturity in *The Late George Apley*—a novel that deserved all the praise heaped upon it by its thousands of readers. Although it is deliberately lighter in mood than such great family novels as *The Forsyte Saga* and *Buddenbrooks* (an association that will probably cause Mr. Marquand to lift a Jim Calder eyebrow), *The Late George Apley* has its own authority and a legitimate standing at least as a respectable cousin in that genealogical tree. It captures the singular manner of living of a section of American life that developed during the last century and died with George Apley (1866-1933). By adopting the form of a memoir, Marquand could select the revealing details and cover a century of the Apley tradition without running afoul of a rigid plot. With uncanny accuracy he shows the price in individual happiness and personal sacrifice that must be paid for conformity to rigid pattern; and while much in the code was admirable, more was stubbornly destructive. The tradition was acutely conscious of its class and its superior type: "The more I see of life the more sure I am that every individual should learn to conform to type." If you are not by nature of the type, you must change your nature. " 'Dad doesn't mean half what he says; half the time he's trying to be somebody else.' " The greatest sin was being "peculiar," and poor old Apley had to fight all his life against the impulses to step out of his typed role. He warns his son, in those delightful Chesterfieldian letters of advice, against marrying someone from New York or the Middle West because of the inevitable clash between standards and environments. "After all, Boston girls are best." Os-



tentation is a sin, and a millionaire Apley must live in unobtrusive modesty. He must belong to the right clubs, know the right people, give to the right charities, put the right face on everything, and, above all, be loyal to one's people and keep up their front before the world. Boston and breeding are synonymous. "Although he has only been in Boston for ten years, he has good manners and is superficially a gentleman."

There is a pathos about this formal creed when the aging George Apley repeats it to his own son almost word for word as his father had drilled it into him. But the new generation refuses conformity; where the father had the longing and the moments of wistful regrets, the son has the courage to go his own way. Something was lost, a little was gained, and in that phenomenon of the passing of authority of the family to hold succeeding generations in line we have, in gentle satire, a picture of an era. It is easier, however, to state the theme of the novel than to describe the subtle irony and the charm of manner with which Marquand has brought it to life.

Marquand kept the pot boiling with a couple of Mr. Moto stories, and then brought off a minor tour de force by effecting a compromise between serious fiction and magazine serial when about half of *Wickford Point* ran in the *Saturday Evening Post* before the book-length novel was released. It has some of the magazine angle, therefore, that was wholly absent from *The Late George Apley*, but its quality is not necessarily impaired thereby.

The novel shows every detail of the author's art at the peak of competence and versatility to which it has been brought by nearly two decades of practice. In the best sense of the term it is a formula story; for there is a Marquand formula just as there is an Austen or a Trollope formula. Here the ingredients are an old house located an hour north of Boston, with a tradition of ancestry behind it, decay upon it, and an atmosphere of foreboding surrounding it. Outsiders are conscious of the separateness of the family, but they cannot understand the place or the people. There is also a clever variation of the lady-in-distress device—here it is Bella Brill, hard, sensual, predatory, frightened yet bold, seeking pathetically for the thrill, moving toward a jam from which she must be rescued. The rescuer (Jim Calder) understands her thoroughly, handles her like the little

wayward child that she is, and loves her with the modern equivalent of Victorian self-abnegation which is finally revealed in the scene of renunciation.

All the elements of the well-built novel are present. It is even just a little slick in plot structure, in manipulation of suspense, in its briskness of tone, and in its handling of character. The plot unfolds backward in time from the initial circumstances and then returns upon itself, in a series of carefully timed episodes, for the climax. It is fairly complicated in structure but perfectly integrated, and it is inclosed in the frame of the malicious portrait of Allen Southby, whose silly projected novel on Wickford Valley and its people infuriates Jim Calder and starts him to considering himself and the lives of his immediate relatives who actually become the story. Jim, who has his kinship with Mr. Marquand, is a novelist in the school of Somerset Maugham; his style is economical yet leisurely, allusive yet smart and specific; and his worldly eye misses no sham or pretense in the spectacle around him.

The Brill family, now fallen upon seedy days at the run-down farmhouse at Wickford Point, has a wholly diverting cast of characters. Each member is given a dominant trait or character tag, after the manner of Mrs. Micawber who says over and over that she has always been faithful to Mr. Micawber and always will be. So Cousin Clothilde always gets names wrong and overdraws her bank account; Harry always talks about the important people he has met who are going to help him; Sid twiddles his thumbs and nurses his stomach; Mary cries because she cannot attract men; and Bella flaunts her legs and calls Jim "darling." But behind this brittle surface interest are the deep social and personal problems of the Brills, who, like the charming but ineffectual souls in *The Cherry Orchard*, are trying vainly to carry on into a changing world a way of life that has become outmoded. They are left as a group of incompetents who have withdrawn themselves in fear or are distraught with an inhibited impulse toward flight. Their world is falling in ruins about them, and they haven't the slightest idea what to do about it. Mr. Marquand is basically sympathetic with them, but is sharply satirical of the affectations and the fraudulent elements in the New England tradition.

In this genre of fiction, of which we have all too little in America, Mr. Marquand is in a class by himself. He has demonstrated that a novelist doesn't have to be grim to be important. We need not befuddle our heads over the issue of possible future regard for these novels. At least they are a genuine part of our times, and we are the better for them.

---

### "TELL ME A STORY": THE ART OF NARRATIVE

PHYLLIS BENTLEY<sup>1</sup>

I have often wished that someone would write a technical history of the novel, and never wished it more than today. By a "technical history of the novel" I do not at all mean a chronological record of novels written, with critical appreciations of their value; as regards English fiction, Dr. Ernest A. Baker's work supplies that need to admiration. Nor do I mean studies of novels grouped according to their subject: the political novel, the historical novel, the regional novel, the proletarian novel, and so on. Nor, again, do I mean surveys of comic characters, of heroines, or of plots, in English or other fiction. I do not, in fact, desire any work on the subject matter of novels at all; we are already pretty well equipped in this branch. What I want—I hoped to find it in those essays Mr. Derek Verschoye edited a year or two ago under the title of *The English Novel*, but was disappointed—is a critical history of the *art of narrative*. Nobody, as far as I know, has yet attempted this; there are hints of it here and there, but they are scattered and, as it were, unconscious; the very terminology of the subject is still considerably undetermined. Only one book, to my knowledge, has ever been written on the art of narrative—that is Mr. Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction*, which appeared in 1921. This is a grand book. But a great deal of water has flowed under the bridge since then; the many technical experiments by Mrs. Woolf, Aldous Huxley,

<sup>1</sup>Miss Bentley, one of the foremost of British novelists today, has published nine novels, including *Inheritance*; *Freedom, Farewell!* and *Sleep in Peace*. She has lectured extensively in America and does considerable critical writing.

Faulkner, Joyce, Hemingway, and others have clarified and extended our views. The time for a critical history is ripe; I throw out a few suggestions as to its topics.

*The novel a narrative.*—The art of narrative is the novelist's job. All novels are all narrative—that is to say, all-telling; the novelist is there, telling the story, all the time. If you doubt that, reflect a moment, and you will see how completely the reader is in the power of the novelist's way of telling. Look at these sentences:

A smile of triumph played over George's face.

A smirk of triumph played over George's face.

A snarl of triumph played over George's face.

What an utterly different conception of George is conveyed by each! Why? Because, though the action is the same in each instance, the novelist has used a different word to describe it. Don't let us have any nonsense about the novelist not being there, then; so long as he is using nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs to tell his story, he can't help giving his opinion tacitly about George; his personality is present. Just as the paint on a picture may be of different colors, differently laid on, but is all paint—so the parts of a novel may be different kinds of narrative, but they are all narrative.

*Kinds of narrative.*—I can best explain the different varieties of narrative by asking you to regard, for a moment, the relation between the novelist's readers and the world of his imagination as if they were divided by a high wall of real stone instead of by a merely psychological barrier. The novelist is perched on the top of the wall, with his readers at the bottom on one side and his fictitious world rolling away on the other. The reader, as it were, walks to the foot of the wall and, shading his eyes with his hand, calls up: "I say! You up there! Tell me a story!" The novelist smiles benignly and replies: "With pleasure." (Or "Certainly," or even "O.K.," according to temperament.) He looks over to his own secret and private side of the wall and begins to *tell* the reader what he sees there.

Now what does he see there? The world of the particular novel which is at present engaging him; a tremendous pageant of life, not endless, but rolling continuously past the novelist's mental eye.

Mr. William Saroyan, that brilliant young American short-story writer, has called his latest volume: *The Gay and Melancholy Flux*; and this expresses very well both life and the simulacrum of life which constantly goes on in the novelist's mind. A seething flux of phenomena, constantly changing, constantly rolling and surging by. This flux of life is what the novelist has to present in narrative to his reader. Note, that since the novelist invented this particular flux, since it is his creation, he is omniscient and omnipotent with regard to it. He knows everything which goes on in it. The cries of its birds, the thuds of its battles, the thoughts of all its people—they are all part of that seething flux, and he knows them all. Also, since that world is his, he can do what he likes with it. He can look at it or not look at it, as he likes, whenever he likes. He can look at parts of it and not at other parts, if he likes. He can hold it at a distance; he can draw it close. He can make it go past him swiftly or slowly, as he likes; he can reverse it back into the past and bring it up again with a jerk, if he likes. When I was a child, I was given a little toy which was called a "panorama"; it consisted of a long strip of paper—about a couple of feet long by three inches broad—painted in all its length with a continuous landscape. Each end of this strip of paper was fastened around a little stick; and the idea was that by rotating the little sticks, one in each hand, I could solemnly roll the panorama along from one stick to the other and back again. I could roll it fast or slow, or stop it altogether for a closer look, if I wished.

Now that is precisely that the novelist does with his story. Imagine the world of his story as a three-dimensional flux—a pageant, rolling by. (I see it as a kind of thunderstorm, sparking and banging and transmuting itself as it goes by.) The novelist has its progress, its rolling, completely under his control. Sometimes, twiddling the little sticks rapidly, as it were, he rolls it swiftly along, so swiftly that details are not discernible, and we get a summarized, an integrated account of it only. Suppose, for instance, the novelist is undertaking, in the course of his story, to tell us about the journey of the hero and the villain from Cape Town to London. His unrolling world brings Dick and Tom to a long stretch of desert. The desert is all the same and not important to the story, and so he rolls it



swiftly by. He does *not* say: "Dick and Tom raised their right foot and put it down, striding over a yard of sand, and then raised their left foot and put it down, striding over another yard of sand," and go on saying that for two-hundred miles, until at last they come to a palm tree. No; he holds the pageant at a distance, so that he can see its full breadth at that point, and makes it roll by quickly; he tells us in one brief sentence about the distant mountains, the burning sand, the sun, the heat of the day, and then goes on: "The sun was just sinking as Dick and Tom entered the Halifa oasis."

Something important in his story is going to happen in this oasis, he knows; so he slows up the panorama and looks very intently at this one portion of it. Now that it is going so slowly, instead of a blur of sound he can hear voices, instead of a blur of white he can see the nose and eyes and cheeks of a face, instead of a pulsating ribbon of cerebation he can perceive the thoughts of Dick and Tom at this single moment. The novelist is excited; he draws the panorama close to his eyes; he can no longer see the distant mountains, but only Dick, Tom, and half a palm tree. From what he sees, the novelist selects the most significant items and tells the reader those; and we read about the quarrel of Dick and Tom, and the murder of Dick, and exactly what Tom felt when he buried the body. Then, after a night of horror, it is morning again, and Tom resumes his way to England. But the rest of his journey to England isn't important in the least, and so the novelist simply won't look at it at all; he ends the chapter, breaks off his narrative, whizzes the panorama by in a flash, and begins to look at it again only when the "P and O" liner carrying Tom approaches Southampton. Tom's landing in England isn't very important; so we have a fairly swift panorama of the disembarkation—with one pause, perhaps, at the bookstall, where Tom sees an account of Dick's death in the newspapers—then swift panorama again till Tom meets, at Waterloo, Eleanor, the girl he wants to marry, the girl who was engaged to Dick. Now this meeting is terribly important; so the novelist slows up the panorama and takes a long slow look, a "close-up," so to speak, of it, and tells us everything that happened, everything Tom and Eleanor said.

When the novelist slows down his moving world and gives us the

actual happenings of a single specific moment, we call that a "scene" in fiction, don't we? (though we should be safer in calling it "scenic narrative"). When the novelist rolls his fictitious world by rapidly, so that he gives us not each specific moment of riding up and down a thousand waves but only the white tops of the waves run together in a ribbon, not the single impressions of a character but the sum of that character—what are we to call that? Well, unfortunately, opinions differ, and no one term has been universally adopted. It used to be called a "retrospect"; but I think that is a mistake (of which I have been guilty), for this term makes this kind of narrative appear as if it were always in the past, whereas to give glimpses of the past is only one of its uses. I myself have decided to call it "panoramic narrative"; and I shall henceforth speak of the "scene" and the "panorama" in fiction, in the senses I have allotted them.

The proper use, the right mingling, of scene and panorama is the art of narrative. Most novelists use both scene and panorama, but some have an instinctive tendency, and instinctive preference, for one or the other. Thackeray preferred panorama, Dickens scene; Faulkner prefers panorama, Hemingway scene; Galsworthy prefers scene, Conrad panorama.

*Use of panorama.*—The panorama should be used for covering long stretches of time rapidly, for conveying a social or geographical background, for revealing the past. Let us take some examples. Here is a neat little panorama, covering one week, from Miss Storm Jameson's *The Lovely Ship* (p. 141):

Mary spent her first week in London very quietly. She visited a few shops, but for the most part she stayed in the rooms she had taken on Miss Flora's recommendation, and read, or thought of John. At the end of a week she wanted action. She ordered herself a plum-coloured habit and hired a horse and a groom to ride with her in the Park.

From that, Miss Jameson glides neatly into a scene: "The morning of her first ride was cold, etc."

For a superb panorama of social background I recommend Thackeray's chapter (chap xxxvi, p. 403) in *Vanity Fair*, "How To Live Well on Nothing a Year." For a geographical panorama, nothing could be finer than those glorious five pages at the beginning of Bennett's *Old Wives' Tale*, surveying Staffordshire, the Five Towns,

St. Luke's Square and the Baines's shop, and the whole background of Constance and Sophia Baines. Here is a shorter example of a social panorama, from Galsworthy (*Forsyte Saga*, p. 20):

They had all done so well for themselves, these Forsytes, that they were all what is called "of a certain position." They had shares in all sorts of things. . . . They collected pictures, too, and were supporters of such charitable institutions as might be beneficial to their sick domestics. From their father, the builder, they inherited a talent for bricks and mortar. Originally, perhaps, members of some primitive sect, they were now in the natural course of things members of the Church of England, and caused their wives and children to attend with some regularity the more fashionable churches of the Metropolis. . . . Some of them paid for pews, thus expressing in the most practical form their sympathy with the teachings of Christ.

Now as to the panorama revealing the past—one of the most important uses. The novelist, having excited our interest in his characters by telling a scene to us, suddenly whizzes his story world back and gives us a rapid panorama of their past history. A beautiful example of this occurs in Bennett's *Clayhanger* (pp. 25-36.) Edward Clayhanger sees a tear on an old Sunday-school teacher's face. The tear is explained by a retrospective panorama, only twelve pages long, which sums up the whole of the life of Edward's father and the whole of the life of pottery operatives in the early nineteenth century.

Great care must, of course, be used in handling the panorama if it is not to become tedious. Long, close paragraphs of print are likely to dismay the less serious reader. Innumerable are the devices employed to split up the necessary panorama, to make it into a scene by presenting it as the current thought of one of the characters, and so on; an investigation of all these devices would bulk large in that critical history I want so badly. Great care must be taken, too, as to the moment of insertion of the retrospective panorama. Perhaps I may be forgiven a personal instance of a blunder in this respect. In a novel of mine called *The Spinner of the Years*, a family, the Armitages, are sitting at dinner when the bell rings; the son of the house goes out to see who has arrived, and returns, bringing with him a young lad, Johnnie Talland. At this point I broke off, and gave eight pages of retrospective panorama covering Johnnie's career since the Armitages last saw him. When the novel was

published, a critic complained of this. The criticism irritated me, for it was clear that the critic knew nothing about the art of narrative; he had no idea that all panoramas occurred between two scenes. But, in fact, that critic, though less well informed in the technique of fiction, had a sounder instinct than I; I should have broken off the scene at some dull moment, when we could well afford to leave the characters for a while. As it was, my readers felt cheated, as we should in real life if, just as a friend had introduced us to her husband, she suddenly pulled us back and poured his past history into our ear. The current action is hung up, and we feel it difficult to meet the man with his career all undigested in our minds. But, of course, the particular effect of suspense and interest desired must be considered separately in each case by the novelist.

*Use of scene.*—The scene gives the reader a feeling of participating in the action very intensely, for he is hearing about it contemporaneously, exactly as it occurs and the moment it has occurred; the only interval between its occurring and the reader's hearing about it is that occupied by the novelist's voice telling it. The scene should therefore be used for intense moments and not wasted on unimportant ones. The scene cannot give an extensive background, cannot give past history, cannot give explanations—at least, it can only do these things through dialogue and at the cost of a terrible waste of time. Mr. Lubbock, in *The Craft of Fiction*, makes the extremely interesting point that in *Anna Karenina* Tolstoy destroys one of his finest effects by not using panorama sufficiently. Anna gives up her world for love—but Tolstoy never gives us a panorama of her glittering social world, but scenes of it only. We therefore see, though very distinctly, only tiny corners of this world, and it is not enough. On the other hand, an insufficiency of scenes in a novel makes the story seem remote, dispersed, vague.

As a general rule, the panorama should lead up to, prepare, and clinch the scene; the panorama sums up time and place and gives the generalized total, the general effect; the scene gives the specific incident.

*Panorama the unique privilege of fiction.*—The panorama is, indeed, the unique privilege of fiction. No other art form has it; drama, sculpture, painting, the film—all these give the specific ex-

perience, the actual moment (with great intensity), but nothing else; only the novel, being a narrative—something told by an intelligence which embraces the whole action and is always present at the action—can summarize. When the film and the drama need to convey the past history of a character, for instance, they must convey it by dialogue or scene, since they have no panorama. But how clumsy and lengthy the numerous scenes, how ineffective the mere words of another character, which would be necessary to convey the matter of, for example, Bennett's panorama of the life of old Darius. This is one reason why "the play of the novel" and "the film of the novel" are usually so inadequate—and, of course, vice versa.

It therefore seems to me an immense pity to discard the panorama technique, as many of our modern novelists tend to do. Mrs. Virginia Woolf has deliberately thrown this kind of narrative (*Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown* [1924], p. 18)—"that ugly, that clumsy, that incongruous tool," as she has called it—out of the window. So luminous an intelligence as Mrs. Woolf's does nothing without clear reason, and the reason here is not only that in Mrs. Woolf's opinion the panorama is tedious but also that it gives an untrue picture of life. Life is not lived in a panorama, a rapid summary, thinks this school of writers, but in the present moment, in our perceptions, here and now. Let us, then, says Mrs. Woolf, "record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern . . . which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness." Let us, that is to say, always give the specific moment, the actual single experience; let us offer a series of highly luminous dots, but never a continuous line; let us always write our fiction in scenes.

Now Mrs. Woolf's work, being so consistent, so intelligent, offers us the perfect illustration of the defects and the merits of this method. Where the scope of the novel is limited in time or space (the same thing, I suppose), the method is brilliantly successful—when, for instance, only one character's life is to be presented, as in *Jacob's Room*; or when only one day's events are to be presented, as in *Mrs. Dalloway*; or when only the subjective impressions of characters—not the external world—are to be presented, as in *The Waves*. But when Mrs. Woolf applies the method—and who could



apply it better? If she cannot make it succeed, surely no one can—to a work of larger scope, it fails. In *The Years* we have a family novel, covering the fortunes of a family from 1880 to the present day—comparable, therefore, in subject to Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga* and Bennett's *Clayhanger* and *Old Wives' Tale*. But Galsworthy and Bennett use the panorama, so that we get long stretches of continuous happening, partially specific, partially summarized, but *continuous*, against a large background, objectively seen. In *The Years*, on the contrary, we do not follow the fortunes of the Pargiter family; we break in upon the different members of the Pargiter family on eleven distinct and widely separate occasions. There is no panorama, no link; we just turn the page and keep on finding ourselves somewhere else. And the result is that on each fresh occasion Mrs. Woolf has to establish afresh the time and place of that occasion; and after this has happened over and over and over again, it becomes extremely tedious—quite as tedious as Sir Walter Scott's dreary panorama, four chapters long, at the beginning of *Waverley* (chaps. ii-v, pp. 14-44). (No, perhaps not quite as tedious, but nearly!) There is no continuousness about the characters, either; we see Eleanor Pargiter a charming and beloved girl in 1880; then Mrs. Woolf declines to look at the story-flux as it rolls by, until 1891, when we discover Eleanor a philanthropic spinster. Why? For lack of a linking panorama Mrs. Woolf cannot give us a full answer. Miss Storm Jameson, by that neat panorama of a week, shows us why Mary wanted action, why she hired a horse, why she was not unwilling to talk to a strange young man in the park. Miss Jameston's summarizing panorama occupied eight lines of print; to indicate the same material in scene form would require four or five scenes, four or five pages. Mrs. Woolf will not waste scenes but will not substitute a panorama; the Pargiter family therefore remain incompletely presented.

*Essential unity of panorama and scene.*—Miss Lettice Cooper once remarked to me, when we were discussing *The Years*: "Why use only a drum when you have an orchestra at command?" Why, indeed? I believe the objection of the modern novelist to panorama is founded on a faulty understanding of his own technique; he believes the panorama and the scene to be entirely different kinds of pres-

entation, and he therefore feels at liberty to reject one. But they are not different in species, only in genus. Both are narrative; both are examples of the necessarily selective and summarizing method of art. The panorama omits more, the scene less; that is all. Until we recognize their fundamental unity, fiction will remain disintegrated and scrappy, as the most conscious fiction tends to be today.

*Topics for review in history of art.*—We should be far better able to estimate the significance, the true character, and the importance of such technical experiments as Mrs. Woolf's if we had that critical history of the art of narrative for which I pleaded at the beginning of this address. I want narrative, story-telling, to be surveyed, from the days of the Greeks and Romans, through the jongleurs, Boccaccio, Malory, Lyly, to the present day. Many interesting points would emerge for investigation. Do certain nations tend more to panorama; others, to scene? Can savages employ panorama effectively? If not, why not? Is the panorama, the scene, or a mixture of both, the mark of highly civilized peoples? When did the convention impose itself of using quotation marks for, and "insetting," dialogue? What effect has this had upon the art of narrative? That master of English broadcast narrative, A. J. Alan, never gives more than a couple of direct speeches; tedium invariably attends the oral raconteur who gives us more. On the printed page, however, dialogue breaks up the monotony of the lines; this has doubtless greatly influenced modern written narrative. How is characterization affected by the panorama and the scene? Is it the popular taste, or the high-brow taste, which tends to prefer scene? And why?

*Conclusion.*—Those are only a few of the questions which rise to one's mind. When the novelist reflects how numerous they are and how they yet concern, after all, only one aspect of his rich and various art, he is tempted to express the most heartfelt agreement with Ezra Pound's stanza in *The Lake Isle*:

O God, O Venus, O Mercury, patron of thieves,  
Lend me a little tobacco-shop, or install me in  
any profession  
Save this damn'd profession of writing, where one  
needs one's brains all the time.

## INTERNSHIPS FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

WARNER G. RICE<sup>1</sup>

The young men and women who hold posts as teaching fellows, graduate assistants, or graduate instructors in the universities of the United States have a considerable place in the scheme of education in the country and often make up a considerable part of the staffs on which they are serving. Certainly this is true so far as English departments are concerned: in the larger institutions from a third to a half of the total number of persons teaching may hold one of the titles which indicate that they are combining part-time instruction with part-time graduate work. From the point of view of most graduate schools it is desirable that this should be so; for, since a teaching fellowship will pay enough to support life decently for a scholar of Spartan tastes, numerous appointments of this kind help keep graduate courses full by giving aid to able and ambitious young men and women who, lacking independent resources, could not otherwise pursue advanced study. Then, too, there is another side to the shield: the teaching fellows, by taking charge of classes of Freshmen and Sophomores at the rate of \$400 or \$500 apiece, make it possible for colleges and universities to accommodate large numbers of underclassmen in elementary courses at reasonable cost. Furthermore, the experience gained by the young teachers who carry on this work is of advantage when the time comes for placing them in suitable positions after they have attained the higher academic degrees.

So it appears that teaching fellowships serve many needs; it is also true that they put those who hold them under a variety of obligations. First of all, perhaps, the teaching fellow feels his responsibility as a graduate student, as a candidate for a Ph.D. In this capacity he has qualifying examinations to meet, seminars to attend, research to do, a dissertation to write. He is aware that, if

<sup>1</sup> Professor of English at the University of Michigan.

he is to keep his position, he must hold the respect and good will of his professors, for he is not allowed to forget that he has been appointed to a fellowship chiefly because he has shown promise in his studies, and that he will remain secure only as long as he gives proof of satisfactory progress.

But he knows, too, that it is highly likely that his future career will be principally devoted to teaching and the administration of courses rather than to research, so that it is to his advantage to find out all he can about the methods and techniques which are likely to be of use to him in these capacities. He wishes, therefore, not only to make himself effective in the classroom but also to learn all he can about the state of affairs in the colleges, the junior colleges, the academies, the high schools, since it is probable that he will make his start in one of these institutions after he has won his advanced degree.

And, finally, he is aware of his responsibility, of his influence, and of his opportunities as a teacher of beginning students. Not only is he conscientiously eager to earn his salary; he soon recognizes, if he is at all the right sort of person, that he is dealing with bewildered and sometimes badly trained youngsters who are finding it difficult to adjust themselves to college life and who, accordingly, need patient, tactful, and sympathetic handling. Often three-quarters of the work in Freshman composition is in the fellows' hands, and often they teach as many as half the sections of Sophomore work as well. From their Freshman instructors, then, the students derive their first and often their clearest ideas of what college algebra, or economics, or English, is like: that is, the teaching fellows represent their departments to a considerable and highly impressionable portion of the department's potential clientele, while they give a large part of the introductory material upon which, at least theoretically, advanced courses are built.

Now this may not be an altogether desirable situation. There is much to be said for the view that older teachers should be assigned to elementary classes so that underclassmen may have the advantage of the poised intelligence and the experience of mature men. In some enlightened (and, it may be added, well-to-do) institutions, it is, indeed, the custom to require every senior member of the staff to

do some Freshman and Sophomore work. In most state universities the main obstacle to the operation of such a plan is that its cost seems prohibitive. Perhaps, however, there are more telling objections to be urged. Not everyone is sufficiently resilient to keep alive, for twenty years or more, an interest in Freshman composition; so, while it is true that teaching of any sort may be endlessly fascinating, it is equally true that the distractions—mainly administrative—that come to most professors as the years pass, the ever fresh claims of graduate students, the exactions of research, and the increasing gap in age between the teacher and those taught, make it easy for seasoned teachers to fall into a routine in the conduct of elementary work which is not exhilarating for any of the persons concerned. The fresh enthusiasm of young men, stimulated by the discoveries that come when they are first put upon their mettle, by the glow of excitement in the management of a class, and by the interest in problems which are far newer when one is twenty-five than when one is forty, are considerable aids to effectiveness. A confidence in one's powers, zeal and energy, flexibility of mind, and a decent humility are assets which go far to offset the liabilities of inexperience and a limited knowledge of subject matter.

But, of course, it is desirable not only to keep this enthusiasm alive but also to focus it, to direct it; to educate and inform young teachers so that they may serve well not simply by virtue of energy and good will but also because they have become really adept and proficient in their craft.

For it must not be forgotten that excellent intentions give no absolute guaranty of a sound technique. The teaching fellow may work desperately hard and have the highest ideals but may fail because, being out of touch with his students, he is incapable of judging their limitations—and needs. Moreover, young men and women are likely to be afraid to be simple and direct—they are likely to think that they must demonstrate their maturity and erudition at all costs, must display their knowledge, shining and new-minted. They find it easiest and most satisfying—as, indeed, many of their elders and betters do—to move comfortably within the circuit of their concordances and topic folios, within the range of thought which they find it convenient to compass in their lectures and which, in



many cases, they borrow from the lectures they have heard. And in consequence extraordinary and amusing things happen in their classrooms. The neophyte who nervously displays his command of information about the early Britons in a general course on English literature by discoursing about the folk who buried their dead in long barrows, and on the "round-barrow men" who succeeded them, will shortly find his bewildered hearers writing on examination papers essays about the "rum barrel" men. And in the same class the student who wishes to understand some of the early lines in *Tintern Abbey* will be bewildered by having his preceptor seize upon the chance offered by references to "vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods/or to some Hermit's cave where by the fire/the Hermit sits alone" as excuse for a disquisition on gypsies, or on the romantic poets' interest in hermits, with a catalogue of eighteenth-century poems in which hermits appear.

That such things really happen, and happen not infrequently, all those who have observed much teaching of Freshmen by fellows and assistants know. Perhaps a good many of us repentantly remember our own sins of this sort! Much can be done in the way of improving the situation by abolishing elementary surveys and other pretentious courses and by setting up others which emphasize the prime essentials—intelligent comprehension of the meaning presented on the printed page, straight thinking, and decent writing. Yet, however good the plan and syllabus, there is still the individual teacher to reckon with. In the English department at the University of Michigan this problem is being dealt with through the introduction of a system of close co-operation between experienced members of the staff who are concerned about the state of undergraduate teaching and their younger colleagues. What this amounts to is a system of internships—and surely it is as important that a beginner in the teaching profession go through a practical apprenticeship under the watchful but sympathetic eye of his masters as that a young doctor serve a term in hospital service under supervision or that a young lawyer assist for a time in the preparation of his elder's briefs and watch court procedure before he is allowed to handle a case all by himself.

To be sure, the idea of having internships for teachers is not

novel. The plan has been tried in high schools and, in one fashion or another, in colleges and universities as well; and, of course, it is approximated in the practice teaching insisted upon as a preparation for the teachers' certificates which a few teaching fellows possess. What is perhaps interesting about the Michigan experiment is its scope, its inexpensiveness, its implications and incidental results, and its apparent effectiveness. The features particularly worth stressing are these:

1. The adviser to the teaching fellow is always a man able and willing to devote considerable time to the business. He is invited to participate in the work by a departmental committee which is in charge of Freshman and Sophomore courses, and replaces the "visitor" who used to be asked to report on X, Y, or Z's classes after he had attended a meeting or two. The adviser reports to the committee, indeed, at the end of the semester—but not on the basis of one or two visits. He is expected to go frequently to his young colleague's classroom—preferably to attend three or four consecutive meetings at a stretch. After observing how the class gets on from day to day he confers with the teacher, suggesting new approaches to subject matter, assisting in the working-out of assignments, correcting obvious faults in technique, and criticizing such points as attitude, the manner of questioning or conducting discussions, the method of giving out assignments, etc. On occasion he reads papers handed in by the pupils, and discusses them with the instructor. He stands ready to assist in the revision of teaching plans and in the solution of particular problems which may prove vexing. In short, he gives practical aid, from a close knowledge of what, exactly, is needed. He is thus in a position to judge whether a particular class, and whether the course as a whole, is succeeding and to recommend modifications of plan and practice.

2. The adviser is expected to help through example as well as through precept. If he is himself teaching underclassmen, he invites the teaching fellow associated with him to come to his class meetings; or he suggests that he attend the classes of someone who is unusually successful and whose procedure illustrates virtues which the teaching fellow should acquire. All beginning teaching fellows, and some who

have had considerable experience, do this kind of visiting, a goodly number observing another man's work regularly throughout the entire semester.

3. Advisers attend, from time to time, the staff meetings of instructors in the Freshman and Sophomore courses, taking a discreet part in discussions and occasionally bringing up for consideration some point which they think important.

4. Many of the advisers serve the Bureau of Co-operation with Educational Institutions in the character of visitors to high schools, junior colleges, and the like, which wish to be accredited and, to this end, judged as to the quality of their teaching. During the present year the practice has been established of having the adviser-visitor take a teaching fellow or two with him when he makes such a journey of inspection. The teaching fellow, though he has no official standing, can often be of considerable assistance on such expeditions; but the important thing is that he learns what the high schools and their principals, teachers, students, and problems are really like. This, in the present state of affairs, is a necessary part of his training. It is essential for him to learn how the Seniors who will next year be in his classes are taught and what they are taught. Moreover, it increases his understanding of the overworked high-school teacher and the high-school teacher's problems, and it goes without saying that a working understanding between college and high-school teachers is, from all points of view, a great desideratum. Such an understanding will perhaps help establish a more profitable method of instruction in high-school classes, while it will certainly work toward the elimination of the high-and-mighty condescension which some young college teachers have for their charges because of their "ignorance" and lack of preparation for the kind of college work that is offered them.

Some of the incidental results which have followed upon the activities of the advisers in working with their associated teaching fellows have been (a) the holding of departmental meetings in which the problems of undergraduate instruction, the relation of high-school to college teaching, and similar subjects have been discussed, with a view to informing the younger men as to main problems and to

inviting them to consider carefully their responsibilities, and (b) the initiation of a plan whereby it is arranged that many of the teaching fellows can concentrate all their graduate study in one semester and all their teaching in another. This enables them to give themselves wholeheartedly to teaching *while they are teaching* and to make their marks as graduate students while they are not teaching. It also simplifies the work of supervising them, since under this system fewer inexperienced men are at work *at any given time*.

Perhaps it is not too much to hope that an extension of the use of internships will someday make it possible for the young men to work with senior members of the staff in advanced undergraduate courses, helping with plans, reading student papers, giving occasional lectures, conducting discussion groups, so that they may get practice in work of this sort before they go out to take posts where it will be demanded of them. Experiments in this direction have not yet gone very far, but, if carried forward, they might well yield good results. What has already been accomplished has brought a general improvement of teaching morale, some increased enthusiasm for and in teaching, and a better understanding and a more familiar association between older members of the staff and their young colleagues. It has given to many of the teaching fellows an improved sense of direction in their work, greater confidence, and an assurance that all concerned recognize the importance of having Freshman and Sophomore teaching well done and feel a responsibility for maintaining it on a high level.

## COLLEGES BELONG TO STUDENTS

M. AND M. RINGNALDA<sup>1</sup>

Nothing is more heartening to us who teach Freshmen than to find so many teachers writing about Freshman English and concerned with its problems. We are especially happy to see that some colleges are making special arrangements for the students with less preparation than others and that many instructors have faith in their work and in their students. But one thing has impressed us in our conversations with faculty members and in articles about the teaching of such courses. The attitude seems to persist that students should be ready to write essays when they enter the Freshman course; that the teaching of Freshman English is a drudgery to which the scholar should not be committed; and that the level of Freshman intelligence is in the main so low that the teacher is wasting his time in the classroom.

All these attitudes move us to argument. The first one is not confined to teachers of Freshman English, we admit. Many teachers in every grade seem to think that the students whom they are taking over should have been taught by the preceding teachers all the things to make the present job easy for the present instructors. Thus the high school blames the junior high for ill-prepared students; the junior high blames the grammar school; and finally the university blames all the others. Now such a system of evading responsibility is very comforting, but the suspicion occurs to a few of us that a teacher's job is to teach, no matter what grade he is dealing with. If students have not been taught to write clearly, the Freshman instructor still has time to correct the deficiency. He has, in fact, more leisure to do so, and he is supposed to be specializing in the job of doing so, whereas the teachers in the grades and high school have the primary work (which they are handling admirably) of socializing their charges. It is a fact that a great many teachers

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Ringnalda teaches English at the University of California at Los Angeles. Mr. Ringnalda teaches English and journalism at Visalia Junior College.



of Freshman English are graduate students anxious to be at work on their own theses and contemptuous of the Freshmen not already fluent and correct. It is also a fact that even the man with years of lecturing experience is not always the best person to understand the Freshmen's problems—but such injustices to students can be corrected if we can ever convince both types that they are primarily teachers, that they are in classrooms to help students overcome whatever faults the students have and make up whatever deficiencies remain from earlier training. The teaching of Freshman English is of incalculable importance to all the other departments in the university. Those in charge of it have the burden of making the students articulate in other courses, and to look on such a task with impatience is to repudiate the whole duty of a teacher.

With this conviction in mind, we hear the mourning of the teacher who claims that he can do no more than give his Freshman classes drill in fundamentals, and we want to know why. The purpose of the course is not his entertainment but the fulfilment of his students' needs; and, if he teaches fundamentals with the purpose in mind of clarifying ideas, he need not be bored. College students expressing themselves are a joyous experience in any year of study, but he will have to take the trouble to lead them into being clear about the words they use, the sentences they write. He cannot sit with a textbook in his hands and read off the rules to them and then hasten away to his library cubicle. An amusing case of teacher laziness, as well as a very sad one, came to our attention. The first concerned a cultured man of Swiss-French parentage who knew German, Italian, Greek, Latin, and Chinese along with the French he had habitually spoken. He came to a certain university to learn English and drew one of the graduate students as a teacher. The young person wrote "illiterate" on his first paper, asked him what he was doing in Freshman English, and informed him that she had no time to read his papers and teach him. To his protest, "But I came here to learn English," she answered that she had no time for special cases. The gentleman remained long enough, however, to write her a term paper in which he wickedly quoted in all the languages that he knew!

The other case is one which is really a symbol for the crusade

which some of us will always carry on for students. A boy had been denied entrance to a university because of requirements, and he was making these up in special courses. He, with a reputed I.Q. of 199, had found the college preparatory course in high school unbearably dull, but everyone had begged him to attend a university, and so he left his own experiments in science and his own delvings into literature to go through the mill. Then he began to find in bewilderment how his gentle and modest presentation of his own work was received, how brusquely his opinions were dismissed. He was especially puzzled because, as he confided, "Some of my teachers are just plain stupid," and from reports of the reactions of various instructors to him, we can conclude that he was right. When the boy committed suicide, another professor used him in class as an example to prove that students were better off trying to make C grades; the Professor made the case quite convincing and amusing. Of course, a complex of reasons must be held responsible for the boy's action, but it may be that, if he had had sympathy and interest from most of those who had contact with him through the melancholy years of sixteen to eighteen, he might have been carried past the despair of the very young and brilliant when they first discover the stupidity of the world. The same world might not have lost him. And this boy is only a symbol of the average Freshman student who is also lost if his first year of learning to express himself is bungled by the teachers on the job.

In regard to our second point we cannot be too plain. English departments have so long considered the history of English literature and criticism of English literature as the real function of the department and the staff that the teaching of clear writing has been looked on as a job for the beginner, the one not yet crowned with the laurels of research and concerned chiefly with the struggle to be so crowned. Now we say that the history of English literature is history, not English, and that criticism, as it is given now, is history also. The real English in a department is the teaching of students to use their language clearly and effectively. This objective deserves whatever type of teacher is best fitted to stimulate a class to such a point that the members wish to express themselves in writing, and one who is conscientious enough to meet the needs of the mem-

bers, even if some of the group must be given special drill in mechanics to aid their self-expression. We admit hastily that such an objective requires more than a stimulating and conscientious teacher, for we know there are many men and women trying desperately to do a good job under conditions of college finances or administration which almost nullify their efforts. At the present time forty-five and fifty students are enrolled in classes which should have fifteen. There can be no real battle of ideas between an instructor and a group so large, and the burden of papers turns the course into a mechanical series of assignments. The student feels that he has no interested audience for his writing, since the class members never see it, and the instructor has barely time to make marks on it and return it—or it may be graded by a paid reader whom the student never meets. The pressure of work during a semester often leaves the teacher without energy to lead a discussion or to give his students something to say, even if he desires to do so. Yet, aside from this very real excuse, too many teachers of Freshmen consider literature the only interest for a gentleman; they do not feel that their work is to make themselves interesting, to discuss issues vital enough so that students will wish to respond in writing, to know enough of our mechanical world so that they can meet students on ground other than that of history. Rather, the student is asked to produce an essay or a paragraph in a vacuum; he is asked to compare and contrast, to achieve unity, emphasis, and coherence when he has been given *nothing to say*, and still the burden is upon him to be correct and interesting. To such teachers, as well as to the administrators and workers for false economy whom we mentioned above, it should be pointed out that education in a democracy is the broadening of the cultural life of *all* students rather than the pursuit of scholarship, the struggle in the faculty for advancement, or the ambition of the college to be known for its great men in the field of research.

This statement concerning responsibility brings us to our final point that college instructors are inclined to be contemptuous of the intelligence of most college Freshmen, or of students in any year of study, for that matter. We have heard so much said of the stupidity as well as of the lack of preparation in college students, the hope-

lessness of mass education, that we feel the time has come for our voices to chime in with the rousing protest. We sat one evening in a group of college teachers who taught upper-division students, and these men hung crepe around us for the sad lack of intelligence in their classes. "What can we do with such material?" they wanted to know. In a small way we tried to tell them what they could do. These children were the best of the high-school crop and had survived the first two heartbreaking, bitterly competitive years of college. The high school had managed to do much for them. It had made them aware of events in the world, which they would tie up with any course if the professor would let them; it had made them un-self-conscious enough about expressing themselves so that they would contribute to the discussion, perhaps something the professor did not know, if he would stop lecturing long enough to let them talk, would encourage their opinions, and take the trouble to help them be further articulate. We even went so far as to suggest that a teacher who could not get intelligent response from students whose I.Q.'s were on the average above 120 ought to be afraid to condemn his own teaching by admitting such failure.

We are brought back to our first conclusion that many instructors expect someone else to have done their work for them. (We have used the term "instructor" throughout in a general sense rather than the specific one designating rank.) They want to be free of the burden of teaching to give their time to what they consider their real jobs, writing and research. Their duty to their students has not sufficiently impressed them; in fact, they seem to feel that the students have an obligation to them, to cause no trouble, to take as little time as possible, to make no extra work for the teacher.

The whole problem of teaching Freshman English lifts itself into a universal problem of college education—a problem upon which people have been writing almost since colleges began: What are colleges for? Are they institutions in which men make names for themselves through research, or are they places for students whose parents ask that the new generation be given better teaching and preparation for life than the last received? If colleges are places for students, then the college teacher's first duty is to teach his pupils what they do not know of his subject, the things that are necessary

for successful participation in the affairs of the world. Pouring information into them will not accomplish this purpose; teaching them to be clear in their own minds, to be articulate, will. The problem of clarification of concepts and of being a little more sure of the meaning of words and sentences before trying to communicate ideas is still as important as it was in Socrates' time, and the teacher of college Freshman English has the opportunity to attempt this task. Nothing in the whole so-called English curriculum is so important; no teacher in any course is more important than the one who first takes the incoming students and starts them out in their university work. We stand by the contention that much of the failure of students in university work comes from bad teaching in any of the classes of the first year in college just as often as from lack of preparation earlier. We must somehow convince instructors and administrators (and powers behind colleges) of two things: a teacher's job is to teach and colleges belong to students.

---

### AN OPEN LETTER TO THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERTS ON TEACHING COMPOSITION

GEORGE S. WYKOFF<sup>1</sup>

You have been telling us from time to time that a knowledge of grammar has little, if any, relation to writing and that the content of a written paper is far more important than the mechanics of its composition.

What would you do if, as a teacher of composition, you received the following paper?

#### WHAT I LIKE AND DISLIKE ABOUT TEACHERS<sup>2</sup>

A teacher has several qualifications to fulfill before he is liked and is suitable to everybody. One of the most important thing that teachers are judged by are

<sup>1</sup> Assistant professor of English and chairman of "English 1" (Freshman composition) at Purdue University.

<sup>2</sup> This, a class theme, is a somewhat-worse-than-average example of the written work done by a certain percentage of inadequately prepared college Freshmen. This per-



there clothes, and there general appearances. One never likes a teacher that his sloppy about his dress. The old saying is that one is judged by his English and appearance. Another very important qualification, I think, is that a teacher must have a pleasing personality always wearing a smile. Always looking on the brighter side of life instead of always finding faults; however I think that a student should be criticized and balled out occasionally, but not consistently. Then after the teacher has collected the pupil I think he should forget about it and never hold a grudge against him.

There are another very important thing that a teacher should think about. That is that at one time he was in the same stage of learning. He must remember that he made some of the very same mistakes. I have had a quite a bit of experience along this line. This semester when I came up here was the first time that I had ever look at a chemistry book. I had never studied any chemistry I had never hurt any lecture or anything. I happened to get an instructor that was one of worse instructor that I ever had. It wasn't because he didn't no his Chemistry, because you couldn't never find a question that he couldn't answer. It was just because he didn't know how to teach it. He was always look as if he was mad or sore at somebody, And when you would go up to ask him a simple question he would act snappy about it. Maybe it was simple to him but to one that didn't know anything about the subject, it was very hard. This is the biggest fault I think that a teacher can have.

Even skeptical composition teachers will not refuse to believe that this paper was written by a Freshman student in a university course in composition; nor will they believe that all the errors made were due simply to carelessness. The writer of this theme is a native-born American, of American parents, has had the usual twelve years of preparatory-school training, and is the graduate of an accredited high school. Perhaps his teachers followed your method of stressing content and letting the composition take care of itself; perhaps, in spite of his deficiencies, there were devious ways by which he received credit in his preparatory English courses. At any rate, he is now a Freshman in college, and his composition—and that of other inadequately prepared students—is a problem to his teachers of English.

---

centage varies from 0 to 2 or 3 per cent in colleges and universities with entrance requirements, and from 4 or 5 to 15 or 20 per cent in those which admit all applicants. Serious errors in spelling, grammar (especially in number and case), punctuation, and organization mar the work of these students. Fortunately, the greater percentage of college Freshmen write, in varying degrees, much better, although probably no teacher will admit that even so-called "adequately prepared" Freshmen need no further training in fundamental principles of expression.

Should we call this student in for a conference and say: "Your composition isn't very bad; you make certain errors which can be forgiven in the light of the content of your theme. As for this content, most of it is clear; however, some of your sentences have to be read a second or third time in order that their full meaning may be obtained. Your organization is quite good, although certain details might be added to round out your discussion. Therefore, we recommend that hereafter you pay slightly more attention to details, enlarging your list so that you may see more clearly what to include and exclude. If you do this, we can overlook any errors which you make in composition."

We grant that this student will probably do no more writing than the usual routine writing done by the average American. Nor are there many of our students—fortunately better prepared for college English than this student—who plan to become celebrated writers. Their ambition in studying composition, and our ambition in teaching, is that their written and spoken English may be such that they can adequately and correctly express their ideas without worry about the manner of their expression and without fear that they will be pointed at as educated people who cannot speak or write reasonably correctly.

But let us suppose we do have in our classes students who give promise of becoming first- or second-rate writers for the reading public. Shall we advise them, too, to stress their content and to ignore their composition as of little importance, so that, if we ever find an incipient Hardy in our classes, he may someday, if he follows this principle consistently, write a description of some new Eustacia Vye in the following prose:

Eustacia Vye was the raw material of a deity, on Olympus she would of did well with a little preparation, she had the passions and instincts; which makes a model Goddess, that is: those which makes not quiet a middle woman. Had it be possible for the earth and mankind to be, entirely in her grasp for awhile; had she handled, the distaff, the spindle, and the sheers at her own free will, few in the world would of noticed the change of government, their would of been the same inequality of lot the same heaping up of favors here, or contemptibly their the same generosity before justice; the same perpetual delinquencies, the same

captus altercation of careses and blows; that we endure now. . . . In heven, she will probly set between the heloses and the Cleopaterras.<sup>3</sup>

With some changes in expression, this is Hardy. The content is wholly his; does the method, the manner, of expression, of composition, make any difference?

Would you permit the same general theory to be applied to your newspapers, your books, your general magazines—even your own professional magazines? The books and articles that you now write do not bear you out. Nor do the complaints of professional people—engineers, businessmen, teachers of graduate and professional students, and the like—about the incorrect English of young college graduates. Nor does the careful elimination of compositional errors by professional writers, editors, and publishers. Nor the fact that many technical writers, including professors of education, depend on teachers of English or English tutors or editors to correct any compositional errors before their contributions are turned loose in cold print upon an exceedingly critical world.

Or do you maintain that you mean your theories about writing (which apparently include spelling) to apply only to the student? Perhaps grade and high-school teachers of English, more or less under your domination, have followed your methods not wisely but too well. Yet, surely, somewhere and sometime in the student's life, must there not be an attempt to stress not only what is said or written but also how it is said or written? If you say no, we may see, in the not distant future, writing like that in the theme or the content-stressed paragraph adapted from Hardy appearing wherever pen or type is touched to paper.

And now about grammar. You tell us there is no relation between knowledge of grammar and writing. Naturally, we are puzzled, and as teachers of composition (who, to be frank, have very little real interest in composition except as it earns us a livelihood, while we do graduate work, get Ph.D.'s, write scholarly articles on abstruse literary subjects, and thus use composition-teaching as a stepping stone

<sup>3</sup> Comparable examples of composition, actually written by students (even after university courses in composition!), are quoted by Professor William L. Prosser in "English as She Is Wrote," *English Journal* (Reg. Ed.), XXVIII (1939), 40, 42.

to something better, more interesting, and more profitable in the field of literature)—I say, as teachers of composition, it is only natural that we (possibly more in a spirit of sincerity than of irony) should turn to you experts for information about how to teach our courses.

If we are not to teach grammar, what are we to teach, and just how are we to teach students to write correctly? Would you have us, as some teachers do, tell our students that certain expressions are wrong; that they are wrong because we say they are; and that students shall avoid them because we say they shall? Do you believe that such methods would be successful? Don't you think they are too obviously attempts to make ourselves tiny though absolute dictators in the compositional world? Certainly such methods are not scientific in a scientifically minded world, where, if things are wrong, there must be some principles whereby we can judge them to be wrong.

Have you advisory experts, despite your elaborate studies, made the necessary distinctions between "formal grammar" and what is called "functional" or "practical" or "usable" grammar—in other words, between grammar as an end in itself and grammar as the means to an end? (In this connection, you might read a very illuminating article on "Is Grammar Dead?" by Professor J. C. Tressler, in the *English Journal* [Coll. Ed.], XXVII [1938], 396-401.)

We teachers of composition willingly admit that memorizing lists of useless or even useful grammatical terms will never aid a student in his writing. Why bother, for example, with such terms as "concrete nouns," "abstract nouns," "indirect objects," "nominative or objective cases of nouns," "syntax," "parsing," "inflection," "conjugation," "factitive adverbs," "adverbial substantives," and a host like them?

Why not apply this test: The grammatical terms that students should know—are they such that by using them the student will be able to avoid the more serious errors that most people object to; are they such that clearness is better attained by their application; are they such that the more commonly accepted rules of punctuation (which, after all, are only devices for clearness in writing) may be better or more easily understood and applied?

For example, how can we teach students, unless they know grammar, that certain expressions are incorrect and sometimes very offensive? To the student who wrote the theme given above could we not say that knowing grammar would eliminate his more serious errors. For example, if he knew thoroughly singulars and plurals, he would not write "several qualification" or "one of the most important thing." If he understood and applied his knowledge of agreement in number of subject and predicate, he could avoid "one . . . are" and "there are another thing." Application of knowledge of participles and tense and voice formation would never permit "are judge," "had look," and "was look." And knowing phrases, clauses, and sentences would prevent the use of a phrase for an independent clause or statement or of two complete sentences as one sentence.

Or are we, when we thus try to teach students what expressions are incorrect and why, merely wasting our own and our students' time and accepting our salaries either for useless labor or under false pretenses?

We, too, have found numerous examples (how numerous, their percentages, and their significance we leave to your statistics) of two very puzzling phenomena, in the explanation of which we humbly offer certain hypotheses for your consideration. Some students write very clear, correct, and emphatic compositions; and yet these same students are unable to recognize common grammatical terms or even to define them when they are mentioned. Our theory is either that these students have been very fortunate in having read widely and have learned to write by absorbing unconsciously the principles of correct grammar without having learned the terminology of these principles (a method, incidentally, which many students are unable to follow) or that these students have learned, at some time, those principles, have applied them, and, having made their application a matter of habit, have forgotten their names and write without consciously thinking of them—just as all who do much writing no longer think specifically of such terms as "subjects," "predicates," "number," "tense," and the like, when they write.

On the other hand—and this is the second puzzling phenomenon—there are students who know the names and definitions of grammatical terms, who can point out grammatical errors in others' writ-



ing, but who seem completely unable to apply this knowledge to their own writing. It is these students about whom we teachers of composition are in some concern. The problem here seems more a psychological than a compositional one—the practical application of knowledge. Perhaps by constant exercise and by our showing the utility of these principles in practice, such students may be taught to apply their knowledge.

Or perhaps we are all wrong, in this matter and in many others. If so, we humbly sit as disciples at your feet and humbly (and sincerely) ask that you will give us the benefits of your wisdom and your experience concerning what and how we are to teach.

And if, between you as educational experts and us as composition-teachers, the difficulties are in misunderstanding one another, the fault is not entirely ours. Some of you, at least, have been reckless in your statements about content-versus-composition and about grammar-versus-writing, without adequate qualification and explanation; and we, on our part, have understood your statements perhaps too literally. That a knowledge of usable grammar is not entirely useless in writing we assume from certain chapters in *An Experience Curriculum in English*, a report which some of you helped to prepare. We should like to see further research made on the relationship between usable or practical grammar and writing.

But as teachers of English we naturally cannot be expected to do such research. Our main interests—we are constantly told—are, or should be, literary history and literary criticism; and teachers of composition are, and can expect to be, only pedagogic pretenders, academic proletarians, section hands, doers of drudgery, and unhappy, disillusioned men and women, without hope of professional or financial reward (see Oscar James Campbell, "The Failure of Freshman English," *English Journal* [Coll. Ed.], XXVIII [1939], 177-85). If, despite such a present and future, we take our compositional tasks seriously and try conscientiously to help our students improve in their writing, we must, in sheer desperation (if you will pardon a left-handed compliment), look to you, and to you only, for guidance and assistance in the solution of our compositional problems.

## ASSIGNED VERSUS FREE READINGS IN THE SURVEY COURSE<sup>1</sup>

ERNEST VAN KEUREN

In conducting the survey course in literature, one must decide how much emphasis is to be placed upon the literature itself and how much upon the historical background. One can also choose whether he will hold his students to the completion of a precise set of assignments or permit them to range somewhat freely according to their own tastes. Though disclaiming any special aptitude for the task, I purpose herein to weigh the merits of these choices.

Doubtless there is today too much emphasis placed upon pedagogic method, too much of a tendency to regard it as infallible, a short cut to success; yet there is certainly a place for its consideration. I am not, however, overlooking the fact that the teaching of literature depends primarily upon the equipment, the personality, the enthusiasm of the instructor, and upon the capacity, the industry, and the malleability of the student.

The first step in dealing with my topic would seem to be the definition of objectives. I cannot conceive of a finer summary of the general aims of the study of literature than that presented in the "Statement of the Committee of Twenty-four," published in the April, 1939, issue of the *English Journal*. This statement deals with the necessary relation between such study and the solution of human problems—problems like the constructive use of leisure, the development of an integrated personality, and training for responsible citizenship. Literature plays a vital part in the attainment of these ends; and surely no course in literature is so important as the survey. It is the only one which many college students ever get, and for some of them it is the only contact with the humanities.

In addition to these general aims, the survey has certain peculiar

<sup>1</sup> Read before the Indiana College English Association, Indianapolis, May 12, 1939. Mr. Van Keuren's experimenting was done in Evansville College, where he is a professor of English.

ones of its own. I make no claim to completeness in this analysis, but I recognize at least five distinct functions of the course. I shall list them in what I believe is the climactic order.

First, the survey course should aid in teaching students to write well. I am not recommending that it replace practice in composition under correction; the composition course serves a purpose, but I very much doubt whether the writing of a weekly theme can ever be the decisive factor in a student's usage. Orally, that usage is determined very largely by the speech of his associates; he talks as he hears others talk. And the corollary of that proposition is that he writes as he sees others write. It seems likely, therefore, that the constant reading of well-written books will materially aid the student in acquiring the habit of writing well.

Second, the survey course should enable students to do a bit of window-shopping in the field of literature. Many of them will wish to elect advanced, specialized courses in their upperclass years. The introductory course should give them opportunity to do enough sampling that they may discover for what types of literature they have a taste and what types are likely to prove of the greatest value. Even though the student's curriculum does not permit him to elect advanced courses in later years, he can get from the survey some basis of choice for leisure reading throughout the remainder of his life. From the standpoint of the Department of English the survey is a kind of advertising medium; and full justice to the specialist might involve his being given opportunity to present his individual field to the students.

A third function should be the development of the critical faculty. In his Preface to *Three Plays for Puritans*, Bernard Shaw says of his work, "I like explaining its merits to the huge majority who don't know good work from bad. It does them good." It might not be wise for every English teacher to adopt the arrogant attitude of Mr. Shaw; but it is certainly one's duty, tactfully or otherwise, to point out the merits of a work of literature to students who do not know good work from bad.

Not only should the teacher point out these merits; he ought, in the fourth place, to lead his students to prefer the best. Since I have placed this aim so far along in my ascending scale, it is clear

that I regard it as a very important point; I think I have a deeper yearning to do this than to perform any other of the functions so far named. But the development of taste is a very, very difficult thing to measure; and only at rare intervals, I think, can one hope to learn whether he has succeeded in promoting it. To know what constitutes a good book is one thing; to desire to read it is another. I do not wish to be unduly cynical, but I suspect that students will profess enthusiasm which they do not feel if they think it politic to do so. Professions are therefore odious. But here and there a flash of real interest will reward the instructor.

Fifth, and finally, the survey course should provide students with an adequate background. If literature is, indeed, the best and noblest thoughts of the best and noblest men, the widest possible contact with literature is essential to any education. It will assist the student in enriching his own experience, will help him to choose wisely his own personal philosophy, will guide him in his relations with other members of society, and will provide him with standards for the exercise of citizenship. Certainly these ends are more economically served by the study of literature than by learning in the actual practice of life. As Roger Ascham pointed out in *The Schoolmaster*, "Learning teacheth more in one year than experience in twenty; and learning teacheth safely, when experience maketh mo miserable, than wise. He hazardeth sore that waxeth wise by experience."

These, then, are five of the functions of the survey course. The problem of how to perform them is not to be solved by some panacea in the form of a method. More probably we shall have to use all possible methods and, as Shakespeare puts it, "pour we in our country's purge each drop of us." But I want now to examine the various techniques with reference to their serving these ends. There are three techniques under consideration: One puts emphasis upon literary trends in relation to the lives of the authors and to contemporary conditions. The second emphasizes the literature itself through a program of definitely assigned reading. The third allows the student to roam more or less according to his will through both the literature and the backgrounds.

In the spring term of 1938 I tried out this third method. I selected

for the purpose a specially capable group of the members of the class, doing so upon the basis of their scores in the psychological test, the reading test, and the English entrance test; their point average for all college work; and their grades in English courses. I chose the group as carefully as I could, and I offered them a great deal of freedom in the conduct of the course. A few refused to accept the offer, declining the responsibility; but most of them were glad to try it. I required them to put in writing their plan of study for the term and regularly to hand in reports upon their progress in carrying it out; in addition, I had many informal conferences with them.

At the end of the term I tried to appraise the experiment. It had, of course, certain very good effects. The principal one was that it aroused interest almost to the pitch of excitement. Several said, "Now at last I have a real chance to do some of the reading I've always wanted to do"; and several of them did a surprisingly large amount of work. Library reports showed that the bibliography of the course was put to use as never before. These students found their way to the source materials which I had to use in preparing lectures and discussions.

There were also some bad effects. I think the most serious of these was the tendency toward unbalanced reading. Several students specialized altogether too much in some one literary form; others, in the work of but a few writers. Because of their choices, some students lost the opportunity for the broad view of literature which a survey course should certainly give. The reading of others lacked depth because they chose forms which could be read rapidly and with little mental effort. I could, of course, have arbitrarily interfered, but that would have abolished the very independence which was the basis of the experiment. If I had had time to use the art of persuasion, I think I could, through frequent conferences, have reduced these weaknesses to an unimportant minimum; but, teaching loads being what they are, I could not afford to give adequate attention to the matter.

I am convinced that the method is didactically expensive, for the instructor becomes a tutor and must often repeat to individuals material which could be handled just as well with a group. There is, of course, nothing original about this procedure. It is but the



application within limited scope of the method of instruction popular in English universities and in some American ones. Its value is great enough to justify the teacher in employing it, if he can afford the time for added supervision.

The relation to the five functions of the survey course is obvious enough. Since students did as much as or more reading than when under precise assignments, their writing benefited as much. The second function was not so well served; students missed sampling many of the branches of literature. But, as I have pointed out, the method could accomplish this purpose if the teacher had adequate time. The third function, development of the critical faculty, was probably performed almost as well as in the standard course. Although students were inclined to select material the virtues of which were already known to them, they read enough of criticism to develop, in varying degrees, a sense for literary artistry.

As to the fourth, I have already said there seems to be no adequate way of discovering whether taste has been improved. I feel, however, that contact with individual students through informal conferences is the best means of finding out. In so far as I had time to conduct those conferences, I felt that it was at this point that the method of independent study made its greatest contribution. One student volunteered the information, "I didn't know these old fellows could be so vital."

The fifth function, securing an adequate background for development as a person and as a citizen, was defeated, to some extent at least, by the unbalanced nature of student choices.

Since, under present teaching conditions, the disadvantages rather outweigh the advantages, I came reluctantly to the conclusion that it would be unprofitable for me again to conduct a course in that manner so long as these conditions obtain.

I am therefore convinced that precise assignments are conducive to the proper functioning of the survey course. Furthermore, the notion that students will develop a strong dislike for the required is, I feel, largely fallacious. It may be true at the secondary-school level, where students are required by law to attend. (I sometimes think that the compulsory school law is a vicious piece of legislation; it makes of education a duty rather than a privilege.) But in col-

lege, despite a few exceptions, students seem generally glad to be introduced by their instructors to new spheres of knowledge. And there is no great loss if the introduction is somewhat arbitrary. In *Words and Their Ways in English Speech*, G. L. Kittredge (or perhaps J. B. Greenough) has put it thus: "Education must involve some docility on the part of the student and some dogmatism on the part of the teacher."

Assignments, then, should be precise. Whether they should be primarily in the reading of literature or of critical and historical material will depend upon the emphasis which the instructor wishes to place on each of the five functions. Obviously, wide reading in either literature or criticism will do much to help the student in his writing; probably both branches are equally valuable in helping him to choose his future electives. Development of the critical faculty can surely be best handled through a study of the literature itself; but the development of an integrated personality and training for good citizenship can hardly be accomplished without an adequate view of the relationship between history and literary trends. The two branches are, therefore, about evenly balanced with respect to the four measurable functions of the survey course. Accordingly, I believe that an approximate half-and-half balance between the two best serves the purpose.

For the method of combining them, I am indebted to Dr. Joseph Quincy Adams, of the Shakespeare Folger Library, formerly of Cornell University. Dr. Adams had his students spend out-of-class time in the reading of literature; and he presented the historical, biographical, and critical material in lecture form. Some teachers doubt the effectiveness of the lecture method, but I believe its failures are mostly due to the fact that speakers too often emulate Polonius and "use no art at all." The trick of holding a student audience is certainly not a difficult one to learn; and, if one takes the pains, the lecture method works well.

I once tested its effectiveness by giving students a choice between test questions on readings and those on lecture material. I found that they chose to answer the lecture questions 78.6 per cent of the time and that they scored an average of 4.1 points on those questions as against 3.4 points on the reading ones. Of course this shows either

that students are neglectful of the assigned readings or that they are inadequately trained in reading habits. But it certainly shows that the lecture method is far from a failure.

Lectures should, I think, emphasize biography. Students should feel that they are studying people, not things—people who lived actively in stirring times and contributed something definite to the life of their day. This feeling can best be conveyed by anecdote. James Boswell quotes Plutarch as saying that it is not always "in the most distinguished achievements that men's virtues or vices may be best discerned; but very often an action of small note, a short saying, or a jest, shall distinguish a person's real character more than the greatest sieges, or the most important battles." Enough of these human touches should be used that student interest is, if possible, aroused to the pitch of enthusiasm.

It can be done; for human character is what most interests us. Some of us like Chaucer for his genteel prioress, Shakespeare for his impetuous Lear, Browning for his angelic Pompilia; others find their imagination caught by Tarzan, Popeye, and Charlie McCarthy. But it is all based on an interest in character. We like narrative too; we are always ready to hear a good story. Biography makes a lecture effective in both these departments. Furthermore, it is true story, and a visit to any newsstand will convince the observer that true stories are very much in vogue just now.

I have come to prefer this combined method for the survey course. The wide reading schedule aids the student in his writing, enables him to sample books for future reading, and furnishes him with material upon which to exercise his critical faculties. The lectures awaken his interest in future courses, guide him in the development of judgment, and functionalize the course by giving enough of orientation to enable him to form a personal philosophy and adjust himself to environment.

I wish I could say that this procedure develops taste for the best literature. I hope it does. Occasionally I get a report from a faculty adviser, or a request for future reading lists direct from a student, and I am encouraged. I think I get more encouragement now than I did before I started using this method; but I cannot demonstrate that the increase is the result of it.

In conclusion, then, let me repeat that I do not think some one method is right and others wrong; I do not even think one is best of all, though the one I have described seems to meet my needs. Certainly the most significant element in teaching is the contact between the growing student mind and the growing faculty one. Interest in literature is contagious. Though some students appear to be almost wholly immune, the great majority will catch the spirit of an enthusiastic teacher who shows by his own intellectual curiosity that learning really interests him and that he is not trying to wheedle students into acquiring tastes which he himself does not possess.

It would appear, therefore, that the greatest problem for the teacher of literature is that, in going over the same material year after year with different students, he shall keep himself at high tension. For the university is, as John Henry Newman so adequately described it, "the place where the professor becomes eloquent, and is a missionary and a preacher, displaying his science in its most complete and most winning form, pouring it forth with a zeal of enthusiasm, and laying up his own love of it in the breast of his hearers."

---

### AN EXPERIMENT WITH THE ENGLISH CONFERENCE

CATHERINE OAKES<sup>1</sup>

When Bacon wrote that "conference maketh a ready man," it is not impossible to suppose that he had in mind conferences held at Cambridge with wise dons as well as with his fellow-students. Indeed, we may safely assume that to those conferences, quite as much as to later discussions and arguments in Gray's Inn, Bacon credited the greater part of his own "readiness." Conferences in those days were treated seriously by all parties concerned; their value was truly appreciated. But might Bacon return to the contemporary world

<sup>1</sup> Assistant professor of English, Connecticut College.

in the new capacity of professor of English composition—what possibilities in that thought!—I believe he would not dismiss the conference with such brief finality.

As every English teacher knows, the conference, valuable in essence and important to the individual student, does not always make "a ready man" of the student. It may fail of its purpose and become perfunctory if the teacher is not constantly on guard. With something of shock I awoke one day, not from a deep dream of peace, certainly, but from a comparatively somnolent period of resignation to a problem for which I had feared there was no solution. In talking with other teachers of composition I had caught something of the same resignation to a common situation; namely, that, whereas during the fifteen- or twenty-minute period of conference allotted to each student the teacher was working at white heat, the average conferee—far from being "ready" in any sense of the word—was lounging in her chair and working not at all. Of course, from time to time the conferee was a cocksure soul, protesting on principle any and every correction. From time to time, also, she was the eager type, unashamed to confess ignorance, zealous to seize every opportunity. But by far the greater number of Freshmen coming to my office were content to murmur to each explanation a passive: "Yes; I see"—the remark followed too frequently by work that proved the problem still cloudy. This majority was using its conferences as periods of relaxation, if not of actual repose. Although, I repeat, I was aware of the situation, I was not sufficiently jolted out of my resignation until a day when a friendly student remarked as she left the office: "Thank you so much! I always enjoy these conferences. After working hard in classes, it is so restful *just to sit back and listen.*"

When the earthquake evoked by this compliment had subsided, I wasted no more time. Although within the next twenty-four hours I received further startling proof that for my students the valuable conference was not proving valuable, I did not need it. Already I had assumed the role of reformer. In the next meetings with my Freshman sections I explained the situation as I saw it, proposed a change in the method, and asked for suggestions as to a means of



improvement. From the large number of ideas offered—some preposterous, naturally, or impracticable, but many really thoughtful and helpful—the following plan was evolved.

Each student was to have a small notebook in which she should list, as preparation for her conference, such faults peculiar to her writing as had been stressed since she entered the course. She was to check all those errors which as yet she did not fully understand and should come to conference prepared to discuss them.

At her next conference, then, we did discuss the list of still uncomprehended errors, and at the close of the period I questioned the student concerning them. Where confusion or vagueness persisted, I suggested helpful reading in handbooks or similar texts. (Incidentally, it was at this point that many students began to realize how learned is the dictionary in matters of punctuation.)

The experiment was begun in mid-March. During each ensuing week as the themes were presented I indicated errors as usual and wrote a criticism on each paper before it was returned to the student. In the interval before her fortnightly conference the student was expected to study the theme with an eye to the presence of habitual errors—the conference notebook played its part here—and to list any fresh errors that puzzled her. By the time she came for conference she was expected not only to have corrected her theme or themes, competently and thoroughly, but also to be able to explain clearly her reasons for the corrections she had made.

The usual procedure for the conference was as follows: When the student arrived with her corrected work, I glanced over it to refresh my memory and then began to question her about its most serious faults. In reply she was supposed to explain the nature of the error and the reason why her correction was an improvement. When she had not seized the best means for correction, she was asked whether other means were possible and why she had not chosen those. Naturally, at first, the conference might be centered about three or four of the most important writing difficulties so that no time remained for minor ones; but, in any event, not a minute was wasted in discussing so-called "technical mistakes" in spelling and punctuation, with which the student was expected to be thoroughly familiar. Such mistakes and others like missing antecedents, comma

faults, and misplaced modifiers were merely indicated by symbols on the theme returned to the student. They were not mentioned in conference unless it became apparent that the student did not really comprehend the nature of these faults. Thus the whole period was devoted to the writing problems whose presence could not be attributed to carelessness or haste.

Eventually a point was reached where the student might take the lead in the conference. Yet the teacher was by no means passive. Besides listening, she confirmed, checked, advised; and, as has been indicated, she explained new writing puzzles as they appeared. These the student listed in her notebook with the date of the conference. The value of this notebook becomes apparent, for the student consulted it frequently as guide and mentor. When at last a girl could exult: "I haven't made a single weak transition in this theme!" or "I really am learning to vary my sentence structure," she usually gave a share of the credit to the helpful notebook. Certainly the improvement recorded by the notebook made her more likely to discount all her struggles to gain such a victory.

One may rejoice now, but truth compels the admission that during those first weeks progress was wearily slow. Shy students had to be encouraged; casual workers had to be convinced that the conference was their responsibility. On the other hand, some tact and firmness had to be exercised in order to abridge the dissertation of the loquacious student. Nor, at first, were there encouraging improvements in technique. No one changed overnight into a Thackeray, willing to forego festivity for the sake of achieving three satisfying sentences. Students became neither glib in quoting the rules of good writing nor sharp in discerning their own shortcomings. No miracles occurred. By the end of the college year there was evident, as a result of the new system, only a little real progress; and that progress, as might be supposed, was chiefly among the abler members of the group, who had ranked high in the course at the midyear examinations. Yet for these the improvement was so unmistakable that it encouraged continuation of the experiment throughout an entire college year.

Consequently in the autumn, as soon as the Freshman sections were well begun—each student having had at least two conferences

of the "old" type—I broached the matter to my classes and suggested that we adopt the new system. To my surprise the majority of the newcomers seized avidly upon the idea. Although they understood that the experiment was confined to only two sections at first, these students did not consider themselves "white mice." On the contrary they appeared to regard the system as a privilege and to take pride in their new responsibility. Naturally there were some willowy damsels who disapproved of self-support; but these were few. The larger number were pleased to learn not only that they were graded upon their thoughtful discussion in conference but also that the conference period gave them a singular opportunity to display all their initiative and intelligence.

A third college year has ended in which this system—no longer to be termed an experiment—has been followed. In spite of the extra time and labor involved for the teacher, results seem to justify the endeavors.

What are these results?

First of all there is, on the part of the student, a clearer understanding of the fundamental problems of expository writing, with which the Freshman course at Connecticut College is primarily concerned. During the years 1935-38 in which this method has been used in two sections of English Composition (averaging twenty-two students apiece) more than 70 per cent of the number have shown a definite gain in their comprehension of the reasons why certain common errors in writing *are* errors at all. Granted that the students should have reached this understanding in the classroom and in the "old" type of conference, and granted that a fair number of them (possibly 65 per cent) did reach such understanding, it is now apparent that the new system has made all students more alert to such information, if for no more worthy reason than that they recognize the conference as an important individual recitation. In conference the student cannot dodge behind a taller friend, or accept whispered promptings from neighbors. In conference she stands or falls absolutely upon her own knowledge. Consequently, she must be ready at all times to explain her purposes, to justify the results of her labors, to discern her own mistakes. Indeed, when occasionally I test a student by setting before her a theme as yet uncor-

rected, it becomes a matter of pride for her to indicate the cloudy paragraph, the vague sentence, the inappropriate word.

To discover the error is good; to know how to correct it is better. Under this method the student has grown to realize that her duty is not completed when she has explained the mistake. She has learned, too, that although there may be several ways of correcting a bad sentence, frequently one is much better than the others, and that to find the superior way requires thought and patience. By the old system of conference the student could depend on the teacher to indicate the preferred method in the given instance; now the student realizes that the choice is her responsibility. If it is a poor choice, her standing is lowered; therefore she must think instead of grasping the first possible means that comes to her mind. This realization encourages the conscientious student to further delving, whereas it rouses the too easily satisfied worker from her complacency.

As a natural result there arises for all students a keener interest in their own abilities. Aware that few of them, if any, will become writers with a capital *W*, they take pleasure in the greater ease of composition, the gradual overcoming of defects, the sense of freedom that understanding creates. As one student declared: "I know I'll never be an Emily Brontë, but I don't care much. I've learned that I can have fun just writing straight papers when I know most of the tricks." Not many students have expressed such enthusiasm over the "tricks"; but the teacher is equally satisfied with the hesitating girl, who, under the new conference system becomes less stiff and self-conscious in her writing, surer of her own good points and of her improvement.

At this point it must be admitted that along with the satisfaction there may also be discouragement for the teacher when she perceives that some students wish to use the conference as an opportunity for discoursing tolerantly, if not pridefully, upon their writing weaknesses and their inability to remedy them. (What teacher of English has not encountered the "congenital misspeller," as one mother referred to a daughter too tolerant of her misfortune to consult a dictionary?) When this situation arises, it must be handled with understanding and speed; otherwise it were better to return to

the old type of conference. With the sensible student, tolerance of her own errors is ended by this new system.

Moreover, as has been indicated, the student's sense of responsibility is greatly increased. To be sure, some do not appreciate their privilege for a long time. Last year no fewer than eight Freshmen acknowledged that they did not want "to grow up and be responsible," as one of them explained. These eight balked so vigorously at a means calculated to stimulate growth that they proved difficult converts. Yet six of them ultimately shouldered the cares of maturity and grew to value the agent.

That the method is not perfect I am the first to proclaim. Like every other humanly devised system it has pitfalls. Probably the greatest pitfall for both student and teacher is the tendency to hurry, because just so many conferences must be crowded into an hour. Without question, if a teacher wishing to test this method has too many students or too little time available for conferences, the system will prove less helpful than harmful. The conference schedule should be planned so that an extra five minutes are available for every student. These additional minutes may not always be needed, but the knowledge that they exist will prove invaluable to the teacher. Without such knowledge will come the rush so destructive to thoughtful discussion and a tautness directly opposed to the quiet energy that both participants should bring to this work.

Even when work can be done under the most favorable circumstances, the teacher must be reminded that results are neither swift nor spectacular. At the outset progress cannot be likened to that of the streamlined automobile, daily making new records for speed. Results appear slowly, sometimes so slowly that the teacher may be pardoned for contemplating a return to the easier method. But progress once started is sure; if slow, it is usually steady; and, fairly on its way, like the automobile, it has remarkable pickup.

It is recognition of these facts by both teacher and student that makes the teacher willing to devote additional time and thought to the conferences and eager to devise further means by which their value may be heightened and the "readiness" of the student assured.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF TIME IN THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE

ALEXANDER M. BUCHAN<sup>1</sup>

Some people still find a mystical potency in "great" literature. Welcoming the effect on their own mind of a passage read from *Paradise Lost* or the *Hydriotaphia*, they assume that other people, confronted with the same passage, will respond as favorably and completely. They are aware, sometimes, of the associations that cluster around a poem they admire, recalling the tones in which they first heard it read or their own mood which it expressed aptly and well; but, in judging its effect on other readers, they overlook these associations and expect the bare words of the poem to evoke a pleasure exactly similar to their own. If they were pressed to it, they would confess that their delight in many of their familiar quotations is one of recognition, so that, worked into the pleasure taken from the bare words themselves, are many additional pleasures, such as being able to tell the source of the quotation, or linking the quotation with its skilful use by some other writer. In spite of this confession, however, they are still prepared to find a delight, as peculiar and varied as their own, when the quotations are offered to their neighbors, who may not have met any of the excerpts before.

No lover of literature, of course, can doubt that there is something of wizardry in the influence on the mind of certain forms of words. The syllables of words, arranged in apt form, are as powerful in their effect as musical notes arranged in an apt melody. Yet it is necessary to remember that the associations that cling to words are much more numerous than those that are attached to notes of music, and that our judgment of literature will always, on this account, be less pure than our appreciation of music. The very decision as to what is "great" literature is regularly made on the basis of association rather than of anything else; and the belief in the effect of literature is colored largely by the same confusion between a form of words that

<sup>1</sup> Of the English department of Washington University, St. Louis.

anyone can hear and admire and a set of experiences which remain altogether the property of an individual.

Nowhere is this confusion more noticeable than in the common belief in the value of "exposing" the minds of young people to a course in literature. It is not the faith in literature itself that is mistaken, but the notion that the influence of great books will be at all uniform, in quality or kind. The teacher, it is to be expected, knows and appreciates the poetry and prose he discusses. As a result of his own liking for literary values, he may be supposed to be unusually able to distinguish between what is good and mediocre in literature; and, in consequence of his long familiarity with the best passages, he will have an enthusiasm for them that is perhaps slightly contagious. If, however, he hopes to duplicate in his students the impressions he himself has acquired over the years of his study, he is sure to be disappointed. He can read, with considerable delight, Keats's highly colored lines about "magic casements opening on the foam of perilous seas"; and, to the original pleasure in the words for their music, their imagery, and their expression of the poet's mood he has added a constant familiarity with them, as they are quoted and requoted in books of criticism, novels, essays, and biographies. From his students he can hope for a little appreciation of the music and of the imagery, nothing more: the background of associative pleasure can be built up in them only by a long, intimate experience like the teacher's own, and only time can be trusted to do that.

To what extent the pleasure in literature is formal and immediate, to what extent associative and indirect, has never been investigated and perhaps cannot be. The only certain way of discovering this would be by means of case records, similar to those kept by doctors and social agencies; and literary folk are not fond of these. It may be guessed, however, that by far the larger part of literary enthusiasm is incidental, in the sense that casual contacts and highly personal items of experience have had more to do with it than respect for pure form or imagery. Even the literary expert who prides himself on his good taste, who revels in the romantic fragrance of *The Faerie Queene* and the sulphurous fire of *Wuthering Heights*, has a sneaking and well-defined attachment to a sentimental line or two from *Evangeline* or to an equally sentimental yarn by Robert Louis

Stevenson. While such attachments are common and likable, they ought to lessen the expert's hope of finding his own good taste ready-made in other people. If he himself admires a line of verse simply because his mother read it to him, and discards critical judgment to prove the line poetry, what other form of liking than this can he expect in people who have no standard and perhaps little native sensitiveness to verse?

Unconsciously the experienced teacher of literature sheds the hope of ever transferring his enthusiasms. He discovers that the more he talks about the greatness of his favorite passages and books the more bewildered the students become. Worse than this—much talk often destroys any incipient liking. So that, instead of facing this problem of the mystical power of literature and trying what can be done to develop likings and encourage enthusiasms, the teacher strays widely. He brings in biographical anecdotes; he makes the connection between a "great" piece of literature and its social background; he emphasizes details of structure, somehow related to the effect of a literary product, but in such a manner that the link is never thoroughly clear. Speaking frankly, the teacher of literature becomes a teacher of odds-and-ends of history, biography, prosody, and philosophy. More likely than not, literature as such—the substance of word and idea that is capable of illuminating the mind—is forgotten, and the only apology for the class in literature has no virtue left in it. For the so-called "humane" value of letters has really no existence whatsoever in a course that concerns itself completely with such topics as the sources of *Hamlet*, the heroic couplet of Pope, or the pastoral element in *The Shepherd's Calendar*. True, such a course has its place in bringing under conscious scrutiny enthusiasms already there; but, for students who have had no chance of discovering these enthusiasms, it is a sure method of destroying interest or developing one that is as remote from literary appreciation as the differential calculus.

If, therefore, the magic of literature is, like a passport, not transferable, or transferable, at most, under ideal conditions, its useful substitute, the associative magic of words that recall experience, must be substituted for it. There must be built up, in the young people for whom literature is to have value, the numberless links

between their own experience and the apt sentences of poets and prose-writers who have coined such experience into language. The "great" poems and novels and dramas must be read, not once for purposes of analysis and examination, but regularly, over a long period. In the appreciation of good literature time is of the essence—and much time. The process must be leisurely, with time available for meditation on the experiences themselves and the peculiar aptness of literary words to express them. Getting to know and love literature is like learning to follow a ritual with understanding. At first, without a knowledge of the unusual phrases and dramatizations, the neophyte sees little relationship between them and his own human problems. As his familiarity grows, the phrases and the living experiences join hands, and his prayer for succor takes old, traditional forms that adapt themselves to his special needs. So, too, for the student of literature. The first time he reads of knights "in brave pursuit of chivalrous emprise," he notices only the remoteness of his own life from the encounters and quests of Spenser's figures; but, as occasions bring him in touch, time and again, with the words, and his own experience teaches him something of the value of impractical adventure, he begins to link words and experience. He finds, slowly and with an interest that has staying power, how an old form of words may be the fittest statement of an event in his life that is brand-new and individual. Though he may never learn that such a form of words is the result of an art and craft the principles of which can be analyzed in the study or classroom, at least he finds literature a comfort, and so gains one of its "humane" values.

This process of discovery, it can safely be said, must not be forced; and its range, for the individual student, is quite indeterminate. One of the common methods of forcing is the inadequate footnote. Let us say the passage under examination is from *Paradise Lost*:

Others, with vast Typhoean rage, more fell,  
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air  
In whirlwind, . . . .

The primal Miltonic magic of the "grand style" is available for only a few. In its essence it is so intimately bound up with the suggestion of the epithet "Typhoean" set in the middle of a dozen

monosyllables that only an ear sensitive to verbal implications can discover it. The secondary magic of association, closely linked with the other in the mind of the Miltonic enthusiast, requires a knowledge of the legends clustering about the name Typhon. Not only so, but the legend itself, as Milton knew, goes deep into the folklore of the Greeks and their animistic interpretation of wind and earthquake. Only when the student learns something of this associative value and is able to find Milton's lines expressive of his own experience of tempest and storm, can he make them part of his mental equipment. This service no footnote can do for him. Even the legendary background of the lines is so scantily given, in the usual note, that no associative link of any sort can be made. Perhaps the lines must become so familiar that they rise into the thought naturally, as experience struggles for expression; and, at any rate, the process of connection and interpretation requires reading and re-reading to an extent that no rapid survey will ever achieve.

It may be objected that an exhaustive analysis of the sort and an attempted association with experience can never be made so fully. If every line of a great poem and every illuminating comment from drama or novel must have this minute scrutiny, there will be time for very little of it in the education of the average person. And this objection, invalid as it is from the standpoint of the real worth of literary appreciation, is reasonably sound. For the value of literature has always been one of precise reference. As has been said repeatedly, each word, in a work of literary art, counts; and, for any true appreciation, each word must be considered. To imagine otherwise is to suppose that Milton stuck mythology into *Paradise Lost* at haphazard and wrote in his quaint classical manner simply because he was unable to write more directly in good English. It is to suppose that Thomas Browne, Charles Lamb, and Nathaniel Hawthorne, to mention only one or two careful and peculiar stylists, were, in the same manner, incapable of putting their moods and ideas into a more direct form of speech. A supposition of the sort, encouraged possibly by the habit of "stating in your own words the meaning of a poem," is not only absurd but is a denial of literary value. For a part of the mystical potency of speech is the adequacy of a quaint, even a strange, form of words to express a quite familiar



mood or idea. The "dusty death" of Macbeth, the "whips and scorns of time" that troubled Hamlet, the "ocean's long, withdrawing roar" which Arnold used to imagine the loss of faith are quaintly phrased and yet living statements of common experience. A literature, then, that is not studied with leisure and attention for each and every word—the remote word as well as the familiar one—may just as well be forgotten, since its reason for existing is to be found in this very care for the word that makes it "great." It may be possible, in other words and a different idiom, to write an approximation to it—a kind of purée of literature to be swallowed in a gulp—but its distinction of being a most apt statement of a fragment of human experience will have been taken away.

For the practical purposes of teaching, therefore, it seems as if the "humane" values of literature cannot be attained without plenty of time and a limited range of subject matter. If the interest is in ideas, their origin and development, a course or two in "world-literature" and a few "survey courses" will cover the ground, though without any guaranty that the ideas met will ever be assimilated in such cursory scrutiny. To know an idea thoroughly is not to have read about it or discussed it, so much as to have seen its connection with one's own life: it is to have worked it, like a yeast, into the dough of one's mind, and to have tested the product in the oven of experience. Such a familiarity with "ideas," however, cannot be supposed to be a course in literature, since, after all, as has been said before, the word behind the idea is as important to literature as the note to music or the brush stroke to the painting. The confusion between the two—between the idea in any words and the idea and words of the man of letters—has led to the supposition, so common in education, that the values of literature can be acquired by dint of much study and a wide range of it. Actually, the values gained from study without the leisure to test them in the mind and without the intense scrutiny which makes them intimate and personal are worth far less than the craft skills which are worked into the nerves and muscles of the body. The latter, at least, are tangible and useful; the others will always remain aloof from experience, thwarting its scope and development.

In a phrase Wordsworth referred to the ideal procedure: he wrote of the message of poetry being "carried alive into the heart by passion." If a little qualification is made on the romantic sense of the word "passion," the humane effect of literature is well stated in the phrase. It does not mean, of course, that the student of literature goes out into the world to unbind Prometheus or to regain Paradise, but it does imply an intimacy between the literary words and the mind of the student that can be explained only in terms of high feeling. The words, by dint of long familiarity, impose order on a chaos of associations: they ring bells in the memory, bells that chime together; and, for an instant, at least, they place firmly in the mind's grasp a variety of human experiences. So to fancy one's self, by means of a phrase, the master of fate is to learn another of the lessons of "great" literature.

## ROUND TABLE

---

### A VIEWPOINT ON THE TEACHING OF MASTERPIECES

"I hate to read. I've never finished a single book in my life except those required in English courses. I can't see why my adviser suggested that I take a Masterpieces course."

The masterpieces instructor had the same question in mind but, unlike the student, was not privileged to express her doubts and apprehensions. How would this young woman fit into a course devoted entirely to reading? The student's liabilities were clear. Her possible assets were discovered in this first conference: frankness, appreciation of her shortcomings, a willingness to try.

A second young woman greeted her instructor, "I love to read, but I *detest* classics. I have never yet read one I like, and I hope you won't require them in this course." Teach masterpieces without classics? Not a customary procedure surely, and not one which the instructor intended to adopt.

A third young woman professed an interest in reading but complained that she had somewhere along the line acquired faulty reading habits. Her adviser had suggested a course in remedial reading, but to Barbara Lee this sounded dull and uninteresting; she insisted upon enrolling in masterpieces, and here she was.

When the instructor had interviewed the thirty-three young junior college women who were to make up her two classes in masterpieces, she had reached the conclusion that never had she come in contact with a group whose reading interests were more diversified. She saw no way of immediately bringing these interests together nor did she feel the need of doing this. The solution of the problem must come in beginning with the reading interests which the students were bringing to masterpieces and in building upon them; she must consider each student a challenge.

The instructor's plan was clear, her objectives formulated: (1) To bear in mind always the individual needs, interests, and reading backgrounds of the students. (2) To help the students plan well-balanced diversified reading programs, encouraging them to read widely from each field of literature. (3) To help the students discriminate between the wheat and the chaff. Here the instructor attempted to take a middle ground between

those who refuse to read anything written before 1900 and those who refuse to admit merit in contemporary work. (4) To furnish both in the individual conferences and in the class meetings such background material as would enable the students to read with a more understanding and sympathetic attitude. (5) To suggest to each student the direction which her after-college reading might profitably follow. The next problem was to sell the plan to the students, to win their willingness to co-operate wholeheartedly in this effort to make their reading enjoyable, profitable, and of lasting worth.

The work of the course consisted of two parts: class meetings twice each week and half-hour individual reading conferences once every three weeks. The former meetings were different from the conventional literature class, for here there was no attempt to cover ground, no desire to give a survey of literature. If the instructor or students had read a book review of interest, had seen a worth while movie, had noticed a newspaper item of literary significance, this was brought to the attention of the class. After this informal discussion of topics of current interest, the class turned to a consideration of various masterpieces, studying them by types chronologically. For example, about twelve class meetings were devoted to the study of the sonnet, beginning with several of Dante's sonnets, going then to Boccaccio, Petrarch, Spenser, Sidney, Drayton, Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Arnold, and a few contemporary poets. In similar fashion the class considered the short story, the drama, biography, autobiography, letters, the essay, and lyric poetry. Not an intensive study but rather one directed toward arousing within the students the desire to explore further into the field touched upon.

The students carried on individual reading projects, choosing with the help of their instructor books of interest to them and meeting with her to report their progress. To their masterpieces conferences they brought their reading diaries, read their reports, and discussed freely and frankly their attitude toward the books read. A pleasurable half-hour it was for the instructor and also, it is hoped, for the students. At the end of the conference there was heard frequently the query, "What shall I read next?" Here was the instructor's opportunity to offer suggestions, mindful always of the student's interests and needs. "How about trying some poetry? You have entirely neglected this field, and I have a new anthology I am eager to have you investigate," or, "You haven't read a classic for a long time. I think *Jane Eyre* would appeal to you."

Instead of needing suggestions, the majority of the young women found themselves with a long list of books gleaned from the class discussions,

and their only complaint was that they lacked time to complete the program which they had outlined for themselves. The young woman who had never before voluntarily read a book began with *A Lantern in Her Hand* by Bess Streeter Aldrich and thoroughly enjoyed it. The last book on her semester reading list was *Hamlet*—a far cry, it seems, from her first choice, and evidence of growth that came about as a result of building slowly and carefully upon her interests.

When reading diaries were mentioned at the first class meeting, a groan was audible; and June Best with greater temerity than her classmates ventured the whispered comment, "I knew there was a catch somewhere." If that were the attitude, the function of the diary would not be served. It was not designed to be a burden but rather a means of bringing to the conferences some specific material about the student's reading. So the instructor must sell the idea of a diary to the class.

No specific directions were given as to the choice of material for the diaries. They were not to be a burden but rather an opportunity to put upon paper any phase of the reading which had appealed to the student: the contents were to be determined by the individual student's interests. One drama major copied pages of material which appealed to her because of the dramatic qualities. Another student was interested in character, and her reports were colored by this, consisting, as they did, largely of character descriptions. A third chose merely to summarize the books read, not wishing to describe character development nor to collect quotations. All were encouraged to put into writing their reactions to the books.

It was interesting to watch the progress of the individual reading programs: to note the leaning at the beginning of the work toward light fiction and to observe the rather general aversion to anything bearing the label "essay," and then to observe the gradual change in interests and to hear genuine approval of classics which at the beginning of the course would have been approached with dread and even fear.

In order to obviate the complaint that books suggested to students are not easily available in the college library, a classroom library has been started; about seventy-five classics belonging to the instructor formed the nucleus, and to this have been added contributions by the college, by faculty members, and by students. A modest library, to be sure; but small though it is, it enables the instructor frequently to take from the bookcase beside her desk a copy of a book which meets the student's particular need.

Student reaction to the masterpieces course has been most gratifying. The enrolment has steadily increased, being this year twice as large as



last. The students have frequently expressed satisfaction with their accomplishments. One young woman who last year entered the course with a very definite dislike for reading reported at the end of the summer vacation that she had for the first time devoted a part of her spare time to reading and that she is grateful to her masterpieces course for opening up for her a new field of rich experience.

MABEL A. BUCKNER

CHRISTIAN COLLEGE  
COLUMBIA, MISSOURI

#### HOW MANY RHYME SCHEMES HAS THE SONNET?

The sonnet for four hundred years has maintained a place of respect among forms of poetry. Reading styles change and popularity of various forms has become so great as to encourage teachers to speak of "the age of the novel" and "the period of the familiar essay." For each rise in general acceptance of one form there is a decline in the popularity of another form. Not so the sonnet; it has made a place for itself in every generation. The reasons for the continuity of the sonnet throughout literary history are probably discernible. It is a short form; it is a vehicle for personal feeling and philosophical thought; it is a definite form which has not changed basically since its introduction to England. The aim of this article is to show that the form itself allows many more variations than most students realize.

The sonnet is taught as a very rigid form of two types—the Italian and the Elizabethan. Since the Italian type admits two standard patterns and the Elizabethan one, even in the narrowest definition three possibilities obtain. The chief difference between the two types (form only is being considered) lies in the relatively direct motion resulting from alternating rhymes and the interrupted progress resulting from a change of two complete quatrains, *abba*, to alternating rhymes, *cdcdcd*. The substitution of *abab* for *cdcd* in the Elizabethan type does not change the directness of motion. (Perhaps the repetition helps.) Thus Surrey, in "Frail Beauty," *ababababababcc*, failed to adhere strictly to the standard pattern, but he did not make his poem any less a sonnet. (However, he added a variation that might possibly have been listed among legitimate changes.) Similarly, Spenser used *bcbc* between *abab* and *cdcd* to make a more compact rhyme sequence in "Love's Riches,"—*abab/bcbc/cdcd/ee*. Here again is a variation from the standard without loss to the poetry and the form.

Since the Italian sonnet breaks after two quatrains, there can be no harm in a change inside the second quatrain, such as Wordsworth made

in "Evening on the Beach"—*abba acca defdfe*. Also a variety of patterns may be used in the sestet of the Italian sonnet. A few of these are:

ccdeed in Rossetti: "Love Sight"

cdedec in Keats: "On the Sea"

cddece in Wordsworth: "To Milton"

Thus far sonnets have been considered as Elizabethan or Italian. However, authors, like professors, may absent-mindedly or purposely fail to follow conventions. For whatever reasons, Sidney in "With How Sad Steps" used the characteristic Italian quatrain and then an alternating quatrain with a couplet. Similarly, Wordsworth, in "The Sonnet," used a rhyme scheme with *abba acca dede ff*.

Surrey, "Frail Beauty" . . . . .	abab	abab	abab	cc
Spenser, "Love's Riches" . . . . .	abab	bcbc	cdcd	ee
Wordsworth, "Evening on the Beach" . . . . .	abba	acca	def	dfe
Rossetti, "Love Sight" . . . . .	abba	abba	cc	deed
Wordsworth, "To Milton" . . . . .	abba	abba	cdd	ece
Sidney, "With How Sad Steps" . . . . .	abba	abba	cdcd	ee
Wordsworth, "The Sonnet" . . . . .	abba	acca	dede	ff
Arnold, "Quiet Work" . . . . .	abba	acca	def	def
Meredith, "Lucifer in Starlight" . . . . .	abba	acca	ded	ffe
Swinburne, "On the Death of Browning" . . . . .	abba	abba	ccd	cdd
Brooke, "The Dead" . . . . .	abba	cdde	eef	gfg
Robinson, "Caput mortuum" . . . . .	abba	abba	cc	dd ee

The foregoing illustrations indicate that the sonnet as a form, "the most rigid," is actually very flexible. How many rhyme schemes are possible?

With the couplet made of any letter to *g*, the total possible arrangements in what legitimately might be called the Elizabethan sonnet are 55. If all arrangements in quatrains and sestet are kept alphabetical, the possible arrangements in what legitimately might be called Italian are 32; for both types, 87. Moreover, if the second and third quatrains were changed to read *baba, cbcb*, etc., the total would be about 350.

If the poet were allowed *any* arrangement in the sestet of the Italian sonnet, he would have a choice of 25 schemes containing two rhymes (*cdcdcd, cddcdd*, etc.), and 90 schemes containing three rhymes (*efgefg, effgge*, etc.). These variations admit 2,275 schemes for the two-sound types and 3,375 for the three-sound type—total, 5,650. Some writers use successfully a combination of the Elizabethan or alternating quatrain and the Italian two-rhyme sestet (Doria, "To His Lady Joan," *abab abab*). If such a liberty is considered permissible, the total becomes about four times as great as the last number given.

It can be shown mathematically that 51,300 arrangements are possible without destroying the sonnet as a recognizable form. With such a multitude of possible variations, the sonnet form should not prove much of a barrier to any real poet's expression.

D. THOMAS ORDEMAN

OREGON STATE COLLEGE  
CORVALLIS, OREGON

---

### A CONTRAST IN COLLEGE PROFESSORS

Professor Blank, who has the boy at present, thinks he is potentially all right. Blank thinks he should pass, that he has a certain facility but fails to get down to rock bottom, not because of any defect in his training, but rather because of carelessness or even, possibly, because of some character defect.

This quotation is taken from a report by the head of the department to a preparatory school, which inquired regarding the failure in English of one of its graduates for the first semester of the Freshman year. Objective tests throughout three years in the preparatory school had consistently ranked the boy in the lowest decile of independent school pupils in reading comprehension and in English composition. His teachers had given him special remedial work to which he applied himself with persistent industry and high ambition to qualify for a course in business administration.

Her difficulty is that she cannot see the significance of things. She looks upon facts as separate entities, rather than as related parts or aspects. It is difficult for her to cross-cut through material, find the same idea woven into several essays or books, and organize the material in any other way than it appears in some book. Moreover, she cannot develop her ideas substantially; they appear in her themes as embryos, clothed usually in simple or compound sentences and very short paragraphs such as a high school freshman might write.

Mary is immature, and probably the process of growing up will do a great deal for her ability to think logically and to express her thoughts clearly. She is always pleasant, cooperative, and eager.

The second quotation is in a report from a women's college in answer to a similar inquiry from the same school about a girl who rated superior in the traditional preparation for College Board Examination in English and was admitted to college under Plan D. She did not fail Freshmen English first semester, but a mark was postponed until the second.

Which answer will make for better English teaching in the secondary school?

A SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

## CURRENT ENGLISH FORUM

---

"Are words and phrases marked *colloquial* in a reference book suitable for use in any circumstances? If not, how does one draw the line between the situations in which colloquial language is permissible and those in which it is not?"

H. S.

The label "colloquial" represents an editor's judgment that a word is more common in speaking than in formal writing. The basis of this judgment is not always clear. In *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition*, a recent and carefully edited work, these words or senses of words are marked *Colloq.*: *arty*, *flapper* (a girl), *goose-step* (as a verb), *gridiron* (a football field), *harum-scarum*, *header* (a fall or dive), *plaguy*, *put* ("to stay put"), *quit* (to leave one's job), *run* (to manage, as a hotel), *stuffy* (obstinate). These are not so labeled: *flapdoodle*, *high-pressure* (salesmanship), *old fogey*, *sizable*, *uplift* (cultural), *viewpoint*. Everyone would probably find reason for disagreeing with some of these labels or lack of them. Obviously they are less reliable than the designations of regional usage or the assignment of words to vocations (*Bot.*, *Law*, *Mil.*, etc.).

The problem of the use of colloquial words in writing is largely a hang-over from the eighteenth-century attempt to attain a standard style, a class dialect for the educated, in Johnson's words "to refine our language to grammatical purity, and to clear it from colloquial barbarisms." This conscious criticism of usage continued in nineteenth-century style, which in general tended toward relatively formal words and constructions and emphasized the distinction between colloquial and literary usage. One of the marked traits of current writing is the breaking-down of this barrier, and both casual writing and "literature" are much more informal than they were seventy-five years ago. Anyone today who resolves not to use words labeled *Colloq.* in reference books is setting an arbitrary handicap to his expression.

Whether or not a given colloquialism is to be used can be better decided on the basis of appropriateness to subject and to other traits of the writer's style. Many colloquial words, especially adjectives, are too general for use in exact writing. Clipped words (*exam*, *gas*, *phone*) and many others typical of the spoken vocabulary will jar in treatments of elevated subjects or

in pieces for dignified or serious occasions. They will usually fit in informal, everyday situations.

The writer's personality, or at least the tone in which he is writing at the moment, is an even more important consideration. Colloquial words tend to keep writing in touch with everyday experience and to lend immediacy and vigor. Columnists and some fiction writers may use too many; the intelligentsia tend to take their language too far from everyday speech, losing its energy and limiting the currency of their ideas. Teachers have done students a disservice by developing a deadly theme style that is marked in part by the absence of the colloquialisms natural to the writers.

Instead of relying mechanically on the usage labels in reference books, a writer would do better to cultivate his judgment of the fitness of colloquial words to particular contexts—and, unless he is temperamentally rather formal, not to worry too much about the matter.

P. G. P.

"Is *saith* as used in church services rightly pronounced 'sā'ith'?"

J. N. P.

The traditional pronunciation of *saith* is "seth." "Sā'ith" is a spelling-pronunciation sometimes heard from people who became acquainted with the word by reading rather than by hearing it.

"Is *measles* to be used as a singular or a plural?"

D. F.

As the name of a disease, *measles* is singular: "Measles is more dangerous to children under three years than to older children or adults." Colloquially, of course, the -s ending leads to a careless plural agreement.

*Measles* would be plural in two relatively uncommon uses: (1) when referring to more than one type of the disease ("Both measles are in town") and (2) in medical context referring to the tapeworm larvae causing disease in cattle and hogs, one larva being a *measle*.



## NEWS AND NOTES

---

### AN ORTON LOWE MEMORIAL

The following is an excerpt from a communication recently received in the *College English* office:

*To the friends of Orton Lowe:*

Some of us among the friends and former students of the late Dr. Lowe have started a movement to establish an Orton Lowe Memorial Collection of American Poetry, to be housed in the general library of the University of Miami.

It seems to us particularly fitting that a memorial to Dr. Lowe should take this form. And we are anxious to let as many of his friends as possible know of the collection—in order that they may contribute, and in order that they may spread word of it to other of Dr. Lowe's friends who would be interested. It is an opportunity to perpetuate the name of a truly great teacher and scholar in the way he would have chosen.

Robert Frost, Padraic Colum, and Henry Allen, have agreed to serve with me as an advisory committee on the selection of books for the collection; and we hope to make a formal presentation to the University in the autumn.

If you would rather make your contribution in the form of books of or on American poetry, we shall be glad to include them in the collection.

Yours very truly,

LEWIS LEARY

*Assistant Professor of English*

---

### A COURSE IN CURRENT ISSUES

Town Hall of New York City announces a course on current issues consisting of twenty-six assignments prepared by the Town Hall staff of educational advisers and synchronized with the addresses and discussions presented weekly on "America's Town Meeting of the Air." Each of the twenty-six assignments will consist of an article describing the background and issues involved in each broadcast, a list of selected readings on the topic, a complete who's who of each speaker, and stimulating questions. The material will be mailed weekly and will deal in each case with the topic of the following week's broadcast. Those who desire to do so may prepare answers to the questions and mail them to the Town Hall Advisory Service, which

will return the papers with comments and suggestions. Application blanks may be addressed to The Town Hall, Inc., 23 West Forty-third Street, New York City.

Some of the topics planned for the 1939-40 season are: "What Should Be America's Contribution to World-Peace?" "What Limits Should Be Put on Freedom of Speech?" "Does American Democracy Need More or Less Government Control?" "Putting Ten Million Men Back to Work," "When Must We Balance the Budget?" "Is the Closed Shop Necessary?" "Has the New Deal Helped Recovery?"

---

### THE PERIODICALS

#### THE GENERAL MAGAZINES

Several months ago W. A. Darlington advanced the view in an article in the *Theatre Arts Monthly* that all the best serious plays are being written by men and women who come comparatively late to the theater after having had experience of life in some other profession. In the September, 1939, issue of the same magazine Mr. Darlington points out that a number of advantages which the actor-dramatist possesses. Among these is the actor's command of stage technique—his knowledge of the effectiveness of silence, rather than speech, at certain stages in the action; the importance of "planting" the essentials of plot and character in the minds of the audience; and his knowledge that he is writing words for another actor to speak before an audience, not for the audience to read. Perhaps the most important advantage of the actor-dramatist is his power of ellipsis, which the nonactor can never quite achieve. The actor-dramatist knows exactly what he can leave out and, by gaining a reputation for subtlety, encourages the audience to think well of its own receptivity, so that everybody is pleased. Successful actor-playwrights, like Noel Coward and Robert Morley, make their effects with the greatest economy of words. These, and others, have "given proof, time and again, that while the actor-dramatist seldom has anything of importance to say, he can generally say it effectively."

The *Saturday Review of Literature* comments editorially upon some examination questions given in a summer school of a large university in connection with the drama course. The students were required to identify twenty-four out of twenty-nine names and phrases, including "Ecrasez l'Infame," Jeremy Collier, Neander, "The Whirlwind in Petticoats," "The Cingalese Prince," Jules Janin, and the Stagirite. Another question

required students to identify the authors of short passages such as the following: "Genius laughs away all the boundary lines of criticism." The *SRL* editor thought that the best comment on these examinations is in one of the unidentified speeches in the drama quiz: "I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance. Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone. The whole theory of modern education is radically unsound."

Dr. Samuel Sillen, of the English department of New York University, reports in the September 12 issue of the *New Masses* that a widespread effort is being made by libraries to suppress John Steinbeck's novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, which has led the best-seller list for many months and whose sales have exceeded two hundred thousand copies. The Kansas City Board of Education, according to his report, has ordered all copies of *The Grapes of Wrath* removed from the city libraries. He further reports that it has been banned by the Public Library of Buffalo, New York, on the ground that it contains vulgar words. Dr. Sillen raises the question whether this library permits the circulation of Chaucer, Shakespeare, or Walt Whitman. It is significant, in the opinion of this commentator, that the attack on *The Grapes of Wrath* has gone hand in hand with an attack on Perry McWilliams' factual study, *Factories in the Field*, which contains no "obscurity" or "vulgar words." He charges that the attack stems from the California Growers' Associated Farmers, Inc., directly responsible for the plight of the migratory workers.

Other instances of suppression cited by Dr. Sillen include the purchase of only one copy of *The Grapes of Wrath* by librarian Robert Rea, of San Francisco, and his refusal to catalogue or advertise the book. At the same time the library purchased five copies of Kathleen Norris' latest love story. Although Steinbeck's mother was a San Jose school teacher, the San Jose library is reported not to carry any of Steinbeck's works. The board of supervisors of Kern County, the scene of much of the action in *The Grapes of Wrath*, have banned the book.

Dr. Sillen calls attention to Mrs. Roosevelt's comment on *The Grapes of Wrath* in her column, "My Day." Mrs. Roosevelt pointed out that there are some coarse and brutal moments in the book but that there are also coarse and brutal moments in life. She added that there are fine things in life which outweigh the brutal. These are beautifully portrayed in a book whose effect is to renew our faith in the masses of mankind struggling under the most adverse circumstances. Mrs. Roosevelt's robust attitude toward the book coincides with the reaction of most readers and critics.

Austin J. App in an article entitled "Poets Aren't Sissies," published in the *Catholic World* for August, 1939, takes strong, if playful, issue with the popular conception of poets as weaklings.

He shows that many poets were, like Joyce Kilmer, soldiers. Sophocles and Aeschylus were better known as soldiers or generals than as dramatists. Chesterton has forever emblazoned the adventure of Cervantes in the Battle of Lepanto. Chaucer, Calderon, Lope de Vega, and Ben Jonson were soldiers. And the fame in the last war of Siegfried Sassoon, Rupert Brooke, and John McCrae is well established.

He then cites name after name of poets who, though not soldiers, were nevertheless brave and athletic fellows. Tennyson could throw a crowbar farther than anyone in the village. Samuel Johnson single-handedly beat off three thugs. Milton was accounted an excellent fencer. Scott and Spenser were sheriffs. Wordsworth was a strong swimmer and "crack skater" on Rydal Lake. Even the so-called "gentle" Shakespeare so frightened someone that this latter applied for police protection against a threatened drubbing by Shakespeare. In short, the "Poets Aren't Sissies."

Kenneth Burke undertakes to inspect Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in his article, "The Rhetoric of Hitler's Battle," appearing in the summer issue of the *Southern Review*. He finds that since every movement that would recruit its followers from many discordant and divergent bands must have some spot toward which all roads lead, Hitler selected Munich as his Mecca, as the materialization of his unifying panacea. Having found his Rome, he fixed upon the "international Jew" as his devil. A pattern of sexual symbols in which Germany in dispersion is the "dehorned Siegfried," the masses "feminine," and the orator the male who woos the masses, he further essentializes the common enemy, the "villainous Jew" who seeks to "seduce" them. It is good medicine for the Aryan members of the middle class, moreover, to have the projected device of the scapegoat whereby the bad features can be allocated to the devil and one can respect himself by a distinction between "good" capitalism and "bad" capitalism. (So acute was the need for this therapy, apparently, that the myth was accepted, although Hitler never explained how the triumph of "Jewish bolshevism" would also be the triumph of "Jewish finance.") But the selection of the Jew as Hitler's unifying devil-function was not merely a purely calculating act. His early experiences with the dialecticians of the class struggle who so skilfully blasted his muddled speculations and made the problem of unity too complex for his chauvinistic

mind put him into a state of uncertainty that was finally "solved" by rage.

Hitler's demagogic efficiency may be accounted for in part through his corrupt use of religious patterns, particularly the preoccupation with personality and a noneconomic explanation for economic ills. Thus his unification device was characterized by emphasis upon inborn dignity—for all except the so-called "inferior" races, in particular Jews and Negroes—the projection device in which frustration may be assigned to a cause outside the self; and symbolic rebirth, in which he corrupted the idea of a spiritual ancestry in Christianity into the concept of a mythical blood stream. There was value, too, in the noneconomic interpretation of economic ills, because it enabled him to secure financial backers.

In advocating the presence of a special Nazi guard in Nazi uniform as a means of placing the center of authority in the Nazi party, Hitler suggests to our own American authorities the need to police all Nazi gatherings by the constituted authorities alone. But the most effective defense against Hitler is to find all available ways of making the Hitlerites' distortions of religion apparent in order that politicians of his kind in America may be unable to perform a similar swindle.

Louis Untermeyer recalls in the August *Harper's* the personality of Amy Lowell, the New England poet who kept the American literary world in a continuous stir in the decade from 1915 to 1925. To him she seemed "a storm center," "a cyclone on the warpath," "an event," "a national phenomenon," "a freak of nature," "a dynamo on the loose." Squat of stature, addicted to large cigars and to huge, long-haired, drooling sheep dogs (her guests carried bath towels in defense against their caresses), bearing down upon editors and publishers with dictatorial commands or with her resources of wealth, charm, political astuteness, family background, and good fellowship, Amy Lowell, "sister of Harvard University," was a personality to be remembered.

Amy exulted in the conflict raging over the Imagist movement started by Ezra Pound, T. E. Hulme, and others in 1912, as a revolt against the "morbid" romanticism of the time. Meeting with Pound in London, she returned to America to head an imagist movement of her own, referred to contemptuously by Pound as the "Amygist" movement. Amy believed that because of her flair for publicity she had been able to save the movement which, in her judgment, Pound would have ruined.

It was her biography of Keats which finally drained her abundant energy. Her work on the Keats materials, of which she owned one of the



largest collections in existence, puzzling over his manuscripts, tracking down his annotations, and retracing his pencil scrawls, received almost vituperative reviews from such presumably friendly critics as J. C. Squire and Robert Lynd. Unaffectedly in love with Keats—for him she suffered uncounted pains and ruptured the small blood vessels in her eyes—"she poured her life blood" into the dead poet.

Amy Lowell died an isolated aristocrat, scornful of the common people and hostile to radicals. Of her, Malcolm Cowley wrote, "It is hard to write true poems when one is rich, blanketed with 4% debentures and rocked to sleep in a cradle of sound common stocks."

"It sometimes seems a pity she determined to be a poet at all," concludes Mr. Untermeyer. "She would have been so much happier as the Senator from Massachusetts."

Under the challenging title, "Radio Cleans House," C. R. Carskadon discusses in a recent issue of the *New Republic* the official report of the Committee on Program Standards presented to the National Convention of the National Association of Broadcasters in Atlantic City during the month of July. The committee was appointed by Neville Miller, executive head of the N.A.B. and former mayor of Louisville.

The code adopted at the Atlantic City meeting has this to say about controversial public issues:

As part of their public service networks and stations shall provide time for the presentation of public questions, including those of controversial nature. Such time shall be allotted with due regard to all the other elements of balanced program schedules and to the degree of public interest in the questions to be presented. Broadcasters shall use their best efforts to allot such time with fairness to all elements in a given controversy.

Time for the presentation of controversial issues shall not be sold, except for political broadcasts. . . . This exception is made because at certain times the contending parties want to use, and are entitled to use, more time than broadcasters can possibly afford to give away.

Concerning the broadcasting of news it declares:

News shall not be selected for the purpose of furthering or hindering either side of any controversial issue, nor shall it be colored by the opinions or desires of the station or network management, the editor or others engaged in its preparation or the person actually delivering it over the air, or, in the case of sponsored news broadcasts, the advertiser. . . . News commentators, as well as all other news casters, shall be governed by these provisions.

Of particular interest in connection with the broadcasts of Father Coughlin is the declaration that "radio, which reaches men of all creeds and

racess simultaneously, may not be used to convey attacks upon another's race or religion."

Mr. Carskadon concludes his discussion with a general approval of the trend which the new code represents, although admitting that we are still considerably short of a radio Utopia.

John Crowe Ransom studies T. S. Eliot's recent return to the drama, with the publication of *The Family Reunion*, in the August, 1939, issue of *Poetry*. Eliot resembles Shaw in his satiric touch, but unlike Shaw, he fails to sustain the satire uproariously. In a more fundamental way he resembles Ibsen, who had the metaphysical dimension in his thinking. Nevertheless, in leaving formal poetry for the drama, Eliot must have realized that the new medium was not well suited to his purpose.

Eliot's failure does not lie in a lack of mastery of characterization, the handling of thought sequence, the exposition of background through dialogue, or such other techniques as belong to an oral form like drama. Without any fuss he has picked up the knack for the close structural effects of drama and has demonstrated that his famous and original capacity as poet was inclusive rather than exclusive. Mr. Eliot knows how to epitomize a scene or a group of characters with very terse exhibits.

Eliot's device in introducing the idea of expiation embodied in a band of Eumenides silently driving the leading character home to obtain a sense of the curse upon him and his house is inappropriate to our time. The hard-boiled audience will not believe in the device; the sensitive and literary people will regard these features as too readily picked up from another context.

*The Family Reunion* is an atmospheric play better than the writer had bargained for, but it does not represent the Eliot he knew as a poet. "It is that Eliot warmed over for 'theatre.'"

In the last twenty-five years the drama has developed more than in any corresponding period since the sixteenth century, and in this development the universities have had a potent influence. Writing in support of this view in the July, 1939, *Théatre Arts Monthly*, Lee Mitchell points out that a little more than two decades ago the university theater existed only as seed in the project at Carnegie and Harvard. Since then graduate students from these and other institutions have become teachers of the vital principles of the drama and have in one university stimulated the growth of a folk drama native to the region; in another, have built a laboratory of experiment in forms; in still another, have cultivated an in-

terest in research, with a consequent elevation of technical and scholarly standards. Today each year witnesses the erection of new university theaters, in both plan and equipment surpassing most commercial buildings.

It is the obligation of the university not to forget the distinction between drama and other literature, because drama is written to be staged. The veterans of the theater know how many a well-edited classic seemingly dull in spite of its abundant ballast of footnotes may be profoundly and memorably moving on the stage. But it is hard to demonstrate the reasons for this to the Sophomore, who has no opportunity of seeing such literature in the life. In conjunction with other departments of a university it is possible to produce practically any play written in any language. In interdepartmental co-operation both the theater and the respective departments are benefited.

Mr. Mitchell declares that

twenty-five years hence the university theater will be more generally regarded by the older departments as a powerful and cultural force and less as a profitable student-attracting, semi-curricular educational force. Two things will cause the change: one will be the accretion of instructors who are scholars of perceptible stature in addition to being masters of their theatrical craft. The other will be the increasing articulateness of the university theater in stating its aims and policies and pointing out the milestones in its progress.

#### THE PROFESSIONAL ARTICLES

In a pamphlet published and distributed free of charge by the Dramatists' Play Service (6 E. 39th Street, New York City) Glenn Hughes, executive director of the division of drama of the University of Washington, describes the "penthouse idea" as employed in the play-production program of the University of Washington. The Penthouse Theatre, which took its name from the home which a friend of the producer placed at his disposal when the "circus" technique was first applied to the production of certain types of plays, seats 175 in the audience, has an elliptical auditorium, domed roof, four entrances to the stage arranged symmetrically, and a lobby circling the entire auditorium. The audience sits in raised seats arranged around four sides of the auditorium, while the acting area is in the center of the theater. Farce and comedy are the type of play best adapted to penthouse presentation. "It is a sociable theatre," writes Mr. Hughes, "where the audience becomes vitally a part of the action, and where laughter is contagious."

"A Continuing Survey of the Motion Picture in America" is published weekly by Theatre Patrons, Incorporated, 116 Church Street, New Haven, Connecticut. This magazine, or service, as it sometimes describes itself, apparently began with the present calendar year. Its banner shows Dr. Mark A. May, of Yale University, president, and Jack W. Shafer, editor. The weekly issue of about four pages lists the new photoplays of the period, each with complete personnel, comments upon them, and presents two or more stills chosen from the pictures discussed. The tone of the comment is generally favorable, but the summary and discussion make the nature of each picture sufficiently plain to guide the teacher or pupil shopping for movies. These weekly issues are punched for insertion in a loose-leaf cover, and to them are added quarterly a list of documentary films and a comment on motion-picture trends by Allardyce Nicoll. Monthly there is an article on foreign films and one on the movie of the month. There are also two other sections on paper of different color giving biographical notes, academy awards, and considerable other information which would be convenient for reference. The cost of this service is \$5.00 per year.

Conscientious lighting artists for the legitimate stage are increasingly recognizing the need of seeing the stage while a play is in progress. In new theater auditoriums the operator is enabled to modulate the intensity of his lighting instruments and to have an unobstructed view of the stage while this modulation is in progress by means of remote-control equipment installed in light booths at the back of the auditorium. In old theater auditoriums the problem, however, is more complicated.

Herbert V. Hake suggests in the July, 1939, *Theatre Arts Monthly* the use of a movable control booth of the kind used in the auditorium of the Iowa State Teachers College. This booth was made soundproof in order to avoid disturbing the audience and is constructed of light materials to permit convenient handling. Windows on the front and two sides are placed high enough to permit an unobstructed view of the stage over the heads of the audience. A door at one side provides ventilation between cues. With the addition of a bookkeeper's stool and a narrow wall desk the booth has become an inexpensive and valuable adjunct to college equipment for play production.

Dr. Raymond Walters, president of the University of Cincinnati, presents an elaborate analysis of recent trends in collegiate enrolment in the September 9 issue of *School and Society*. Some of his more significant conclusions are: (1) During the 1920's the United States population in-



creased 16 per cent, while the collegiate enrolment mounted 84 per cent. (2) From the turn of the century to 1930 the number of students soared from just under 240,000 to well over a million. During the present decade the full-time enrolment of typical collegiate institutions in the United States showed a gain of 22 per cent. (3) The university under public control has become the overwhelming leader as to number. Of 817,000 full-time students in approved institutions in 1938 more than one-third were in fifty-five public universities. (4) The enrolment loss from 1930 to 1933 of independent colleges of liberal arts and sciences was only 5 per cent, while the enrolment gain from 1934 to 1938 was 17 per cent. (5) Freshmen enrolments show marked increases during the last five years in engineering schools and also in commerce or business administration courses. (6) Attendance in law schools is on the decrease for sixty-five approved schools. In the law schools of public universities, however, there has been an increase in number. (7) Population and elementary school attendance indicate that colleges and universities of the United States will soon face a diminished human reservoir from which to draw. There are now a million fewer boys and girls in public elementary schools than in 1930. (8) Two factors worked toward maintaining college and university attendance during the thirties. One was the sheer circumstance of a lack of jobs. A second factor was the financial help awarded to worthy needy students by the colleges themselves and by the government.

The college curriculum in English literature should represent a reasonable balance of classic and contemporary literature if teachers of English are not to fall hopelessly out of competition with their colleagues of the natural and social sciences, in the judgment of Thomas H. English, of Emory University. Writing in the April, 1939, issue of the *South Atlantic Bulletin* (a publication of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association), Professor English points out that neither a return to historical-critical pedantry, nor a complete capitulation to the demand for up-to-the-minute literary courses will serve as an adequate response to the current demand for attention to contemporary literature. Instead of offering courses in contemporary literature side by side with the historical courses, the writer proposes that professors, regardless of their particular fields of research, take time to read the great books of today and to take cognizance of them in the discussion of the older writers. Thus a Shakespeare class might well recognize the work of Maxwell Anderson and a discussion of the Restoration wits might include a comparison of Noel Coward and Clare Booth. Certainly the metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century would make a consideration of T. S. Eliot natural and illuminat-



ing. Professors of English will be likely to entice their students to share and acquire tastes for the older classics if they show signs of sharing the students' natural taste for contemporary writing.

The *Journal of the Rutgers University Library* is published semiannually by the Associated Friends of the Library of Rutgers University. New and interesting acquisitions to the library, as well as portraits and antiquarian collections, are described in each issue. The June, 1939, issue contains an article describing a book by Noah Webster called *A Collection of Essays in Fugitive Writing on Moral, Historical, and Literary Subjects*, written when the author was less than thirty years old. The copy which the Rutgers Library has just added to its Webster collection is the author's personal copy with pencil annotations made fifty years after the original publication. Quotations from these marginal notes deal with education, politics, history, and particularly the English language.

---

### THE BEST SELLERS<sup>1</sup>

#### FICTION

1. *The Grapes of Wrath*, by John Steinbeck. Viking.
2. *Watch for the Dawn*, by Stuart Cloete. Houghton.
3. *Children of God*, by Vardis Fisher. Harper.
4. *The Web and the Rock*, by Thomas Wolfe. Harper.
5. *Black Narcissus*, by Rumer Godden. Little.

#### NONFICTION

1. *Country Lawyer*, by Bellamy Partridge. Whittlesey.
2. *Not Peace but a Sword*, by Vincent Sheean. Doubleday.
3. *Inside Asia*, by John Gunther. Harper.
4. *Let the Record Speak*, by Dorothy Thompson. Houghton.
5. *Days of Our Years*, by Pierre van Paassen. Hillman.

#### CANDIDATES FOR THE BEST SELLER LIST

1. *Christ in Concrete*, by Pietro di Donato. Bobbs.
2. *Shanghai '37*, by Vicki Baum. Doubleday.
3. *The Owlley Inn*, by Joseph C. and Freeman Lincoln. Coward.
4. *The Revolution of Nihilism*, by Hermann Rauschning. Alliance.
5. *Step by Step*, by Winston Churchill. Putnam.

<sup>1</sup> As reported by the *Publishers' Weekly* on September 30, based upon reports of retail bookstores' sales during the preceding week.

## BOOKS

### COLLEGE COMPOSITION

*Essentials of Composition for College Students*<sup>1</sup> is a combination of *Creative Writing for College Students* (1938) and *The Elements of Composition* (1939). As such it will serve both as a rhetoric and as a handbook, though the emphasis is upon the rhetoric, to which nearly six hundred of the seven hundred pages are devoted. This text is different from others of its kind chiefly in the use throughout of student themes, so selected as to be within the reach of most students without appearing noticeably inferior to the illustrations from professional writers. In the Appendix are further themes to be revised, with the student comment upon them.

The first part of the book, "Formal Exposition and Informal Argument," is thorough, logically organized, well illustrated; and enough of the ideas are new to make the discussion interesting even to the seasoned reader of Freshman texts. Here the most important single idea is the suggestion to student and teacher that from the beginning the study of exposition should lead toward the writing of the term paper. The inclusion of informal argument in these steps toward the preparation of the research paper is practical, for the term paper, so often treated in textbooks as pure exposition, in practice is often argumentative. This section also includes an excellent discussion of criticism in addition to the types of exposition usually treated in texts.

The second part of the book, on "The Informal Essay, Narration, and Description," is equally thorough. As with the term paper, the writing of the short story is taught gradually, so that the student has had practice in all the elements that go to make up the story by the time he is asked to write one.

In the handbook section "The Essentials of Composition" are set forth clearly, with exercises that are adequate for illustration, if not for drill. Students who are equipped to read the first two sections should find this part of the book convenient for reference.

This is no book for the student whose reading ability is below average, for the vocabulary is not simplified. "See that every construction is syn-

<sup>1</sup> R. W. Babcock, R. D. Horn, and T. H. English, *Essentials of Composition for College Students*. New York: American Book Co., 1939. Pp. xii+745.

tactically irreproachable," for instance, is an admonition many a Freshman would not understand. There are texts enough, however, for the weak students. The value of this book will be in its use with students who need little drill in the essentials, and who want to learn to write well. Here is a text in Freshman English that is equal in difficulty to college texts for Freshmen in other subjects. Such books are few.

MARY E. BURTON

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

---

### COURSES IN TECHNICAL WRITING

I should like this review to be read by teachers of English who do not teach in schools of engineering. I should like them to know that engineering institutions take their English seriously—I mean very seriously. The volume under review<sup>1</sup> shows that. And at the present time the Society for the Promotion of Engineering Education is doing an elaborate study of the teaching of English in engineering schools, with particular thought to the teachers and their training for their work.

Professor Fountain has studied very many bulletins and syllabi; he has talked with very many teachers of English to engineering students; he has written very many letters to very many more. He has studied many texts in English composition intended specifically for students in engineering.

Perhaps one reason why administrators of schools of engineering take their English seriously is that they take all their work seriously. After all, engineering does deal with the physical world, a definite, tangible, and rather refractory world, in the dealing with which and the subduing of which there is cultivated little sense for frivolity.

To be sure, some of the world devotes itself in considerable extent to the decor of life, to something of philosophy even, and, increasingly, engineers feel some need for knowledge, for appreciation in these areas. It is, however, largely because they feel this need as an incidental social help in their professional life that engineers recommend for and administrators require of students some study of literature as a mirror of human life and of philosophy. For engineers, then, "English" means a bit of literature, yes, but still means, in a major way, "practical" ability in composition.

<sup>1</sup> A. M. Fountain, *A Study of Courses in Technical Writing*. Raleigh: State College of Agriculture and Engineering, 1938.

In institutions which are wholly engineering institutions requirements in English may well tend to be influenced by the applied-scientific character of the institution in general. In institutions which have engineering schools in the midst of other schools there have been many efforts to make the English given young engineers somewhat different from that given to other students, more "practical," perhaps, better adapted to supposed needs. In not a few institutions separate departments have been instituted for teaching English to engineers. All these things are stated or implied in Professor Fountain's very detailed and very factual study.

Though Professor Fountain surveys the whole field of English in engineering schools, he puts his chief attention, as the title indicates, on courses in technical writing, a matter of rather highly professional importance. Texts and methods are dealt with in detail. That many courses in technical writing use no one textbook, but either use none or deal eclectically with several texts, may indicate interested and conscientious adaptation to local needs. It is notable that not a few courses in technical writing are taught by professors of engineering. In some instances there is co-operation in the conducting of these courses between engineering faculties and the faculty in English. At Iowa State the English and the electrical engineering departments act jointly, even as to absorption of student hours, the writing being directly supervised by instructors in both English and engineering, and grades being given in both departments.

I have taught in English departments in two schools wholly engineering and now in one largely so. At Purdue, the third of these, in a department which offers some scores of courses in literature and in composition (as well as in speech, of which I know but little, I fear) that course which provokes most interested office conversation among its "professors," I am almost willing to say, is that in technical writing and its "business," applications. And I fancy the reason is that in it the students think they feel a practicality that is not present either in more routine composition courses or in courses in literature, and that the instructors in turn are stimulated to interest by the rather enthusiastic attitude of the students.

J. H. MCKEE

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

## IN BRIEF REVIEW

[Mention under this head does not preclude review elsewhere.]

## FOR THE GENERAL READER

*Watch for the Dawn.* By Stuart Cloete. Houghton Mifflin. \$2.50.

Few writers are held in greater respect than the author of the African Boer stories, *The Turning Wheels* and *Watch for the Dawn*. Cloete is South African by birth, and he is fascinated by his subject—the tragic history of the Boers. There is the love story of a Boer rebel who escaped to the border country; there are fictional characters and picturesque historical personages, all welded into a frontier story of unusual power and excellence.

*More People.* By Edgar Lee Masters. Appleton. \$2.50.

The author of *Spoon River Anthology* and *Domesday Book* presents sixty poems about people—the real and imaginary people whom Mr. Masters has known. In most cases he looks far back at life and develops a philosophy built upon understanding and meditation.

*The Arrogant History of White Ben.* By Clamence Dane. Doubleday. \$2.50.

Literary Guild selection for September. A well-written allegorical tale of a scarecrow who became dictator of England—after 1950. Big Ben felt that he had been chosen by the Lord to scare away the crows (exploiters), and, convinced of his own infallibility, ruled with no distinction between good and evil.

*Maid of Sark.* By Sibyl Hathaway. Appleton-Century. \$2.50.

Mrs. Hathaway, feudal-chief owner of this tiny island in the English Channel, is a well-known lecturer who inherited the island from her great grandmother. In her story she has used the legends of her fascinating estate in telling its past history. Only a story of the people as they carry on at the present could be more interesting.

*Abraham Lincoln: A Biography in Pictures with Accompanying Text.* By Agnes Rogers. Little, Brown. \$2.00.

This volume contains one hundred and seventy-five pictures from lithographs, paintings, photographs, and prints, arranged in chronological order. Long captions for each picture carry the story. Many of the pictures are beautiful, and the volume constitutes a brief and excellent life-story of Lincoln.

*The Bride.* By Margaret Irwin. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.50.

Readers of Margaret Irwin's historical romances will welcome this well-written story of pre-Restoration days with its background of intrigue and loyalties. The love of the Marquis of Montrose for the lovely Princess Louise is the theme of the story.

*Black Narcissus.* Rumer Godden. Little, Brown. \$2.50.

Occasionally, and happily, we find a book which must be read in a "suspension of disbelief." Such a book is *Black Narcissus*. A group of Anglican Sisters made the difficult journey to the General's palace in the Himalayas to establish there a branch of their order. A band of Brothers had made a similar attempt, but had mysteriously vanished from the former residence of the General's "ladies." The book is a study of the sinister, of tension and forces beating upon the wills of the guileless Sisters.



*The Gladiators.* By Arthur Koestler. Macmillan. \$2.50.

This interesting story with its many implications is based upon the Slave or Gladiators' War, 73-71 B.C. A certain "stable of gladiators" led by young Spartans were as sports, resigned to their fate, but rebelled and escaped when the public grew more bloodthirsty and demanded mass execution by beasts at the close of each performance. The gladiators and their adherents set up a Utopian model of united towns. For a time their experiments flourished, but, ironically, it fell because of the greed, avarice, and treachery of its leaders.

*Rogue Male.* By Geoffrey Household. Little, Brown. \$2.00.

A tiptop adventure story of a big-game hunter who stalked a dictator.

*The Priory.* By Dorothy Whipple. Macmillan. \$2.50.

Novels of English country life have always interested Americans—witness the success of *The Brandons*. *The Priory* is the story of the major with a passion for cricket, who sacrifices the prospects of his two nice daughters for his hobby. His second marriage brings complications, and the readable story becomes a semiserious study of human nature (English?) and maternal love.

*Fathers Are Funny.* By Frederic F. Van DeWater. John Day. \$2.00.

Readers who seek release from the overpowering problems presented in most recent books will find this study of parenthood unsentimental, keen, and humorous.

*Mr. Emmanuel.* By Louis Golding. Viking. \$2.50.

In *Mr. Emmanuel*, resident of Magnolia Street, Mr. Golding has drawn the picture of a lovable old Jew, patriotic and in striking contrast to the German picture of Jewry. Sentimental, horrifying, it has a quality of tenderness and charm which makes it popular at this time.

*The Orchid Hunters: A Jungle Adventure.* By Norman MacDonald. Farrar. \$2.75.

Two boys just out of college who found commuting and office work monotonous chanced to watch a tramp steamer preparing to put off to sea. They were lucky enough to strike up an acquaintance with the mate, who assured them that even in these times there is "big money" and danger and adventure to be found in South America. Their quest for orchids grew out of this chance meeting, and one of the boys has written interestingly of their thrilling—and successful—adventures.

*Daniel Boone, Master of the Wilderness.* By John Bakeless. Morrow. \$3.50.

"When the Atlantic seaboard was winning its Revolution against England, and the new West, undecided which camp to join, hung back, one man stood out among the scattered handful of pioneers who were opening the great road westward to the plains. . . ." Half-legendary even in his lifetime, Boone—surveyor, trapper, Indian fighter—has, like Lincoln, become a heroic figure to myth-loving Americans of our decade. Adventure-lovers and readers interested in Americana will find this volume excellent and authentic reading.

*Democracy: Today and Tomorrow.* By Eduard Beneš. Macmillan. \$3.00.

The former president of Czechoslovakia delivered a series of lectures on this subject at the University of Chicago last spring. While condemning National Socialism, he

attributes its victorious onward march to the weaknesses of democracies rather than to the promises of socialism or communism.

*Armies of Spies.* By Joseph Gollomb. Macmillan. \$2.50.

Appearing at a time when we are in grave danger from propaganda, this book is particularly acceptable. People who should know assert that we should accept the warnings in *Armies of Spies*, which is an account of the spy system in general and in the Americas in particular.

*Of Human Freedom.* By Jacques Barzun. Little, Brown. \$2.50.

In these pungent essays the author emphasizes his view of democracy as an attitude, an atmosphere, a culture. His Introduction is "Culture and Tyranny." He quotes J. S. Mill: "A state which dwarfs its men in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes will find that with small men no great thing can be really accomplished." His plea is for tolerance, and he clings to this idea: civilized life must be the goal of democracy; a diversified and vigilant culture is the source and product of successful democracy.

*Step by Step: 1936-1939.* By Winston Churchill. Putnam. \$4.00.

Of particular interest is the very timely appearance of Mr. Churchill's analysis of international relations.

*You and Heredity.* By Amram Scheinfeld and Morton D. Schweitzer. Stokes. \$3.00.

This book discusses the facts about heredity which are of general interest to the layman. Perhaps it is most helpful in destroying the myths and old wives' tales relating to prenatal and hereditary influences. Are acquired characteristics inheritable? Are males of superior intelligence? What does the child inherit from mother and what from father? These and hosts of other questions are answered with statistical precision.

*I Believe: The Personal Philosophies of Certain Eminent Men and Women of Our Time.* Edited by Clifton Fadiman. Simon & Schuster. \$3.00.

Such outstanding writers as Thomas Mann, George Santayana, Emil Ludwig, Havelock Ellis, Julian Huxley, Jules Romain, Lin Yutang, and Hendrik Van Loon have contributed from their wisdom and philosophy to this volume. Fadiman writes in his Introduction, "There is something here for any man or woman of good will, and nothing for those in love with death or who have little but contempt for the aspiring spirit of man."

*Country Lawyer.* By Bellamy Partridge. Whittlesey. \$2.75.

Bellamy Partridge writes the story of his lawyer father's fifty years' practice in a country town. In tone it resembles *Horse and Buggy Doctor*. The book is entertaining and sure to be popular with readers who have known village life.

*Miss Ravenel's Conversion.* By J. W. DeForest. Harper. \$2.50.

A reprint of a Civil War story published in 1867; at that time it was considered a bit shocking. Its revival will be of interest for many reasons.

*The Strangest Places.* By Leonard Q. Ross. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.00.

Readers of the inimitable *Education of Hyman Kaplan* will enjoy equally well this new book by the same author.

*Ararat.* By Elgin Groselove. Carrick & Evans. \$2.50.

Time: 1895 to close of World War. Background: Armenia, Russia, Turkey. The experiences of an American missionary and a Russian aristocrat, the courage of oppressed people, and the human values men struggle for.

*The Hopkins Manuscript.* By R. C. Sheriff. Macmillan. \$2.50.

The author of those excellent books, *Journey's End*, *Greengates*, etc., presents an apocalyptic novel. The journal of a fussy little Englishman, one of the few survivors after the world collides with the moon, tells an ingenious story of the catastrophe. Readers of Wells will enjoy the tale.

*The Modern Reader.* By John Beecroft. Doubleday, Doran. \$3.00.

Such excellent collections as this one, omnibus volumes of excellent writing, are increasingly popular. This one contains stories and excerpts from many of our leading authors and a complete novel by Somerset Maugham.

*Bridging the Years.* By Cale Young Rice. Appleton.

These reminiscences of the poet-novelist-story-writer are written in an entertaining style and prove to be an excellent commentary on life and literature of the last sixty-five years. Few men have had such varied experiences or know so many people and places of importance. The vigor and sincerity of the author's personality permeate this story of his life.

*The Fine Art of Propaganda: A Study of Father Coughlin's Speeches.* Prepared by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis under the supervision of Drs. Alfred McClung Lee and Betty Briant Lee.

The Institute for Propaganda Analysis was established in 1937 to conduct non-partisan studies in the field of propaganda and public opinion.

*Soaring Wings.* By George Palmer Putnam. Harcourt. \$2.50.

Many readers will remember with delight Amelia Earhart's own story of her life, *Last Flight*. Her husband has succeeded in his attempt to present to the reader a vivid, adventurous, and lovable personality.

*Nebraska Coast.* By Clyde Brion Davis. Farrar & Rinehart. \$2.50.

Mr. Davis is the author of two excellent novels, *The Anointed* and *The Great American Novel*. The story is told by a boy who grows up during the tale's development. Clinton Macdougall's father, "a character," captain of a canal boat in New York State, moved his family to Nebraska just before the Civil War and took a homestead, where the women of the family fed the overland freighters and Captain Macdougall dispensed liquor and developed into a philosopher and politician. The story is based upon experiences of Davis' grandfather and is less sentimental and melodramatic than many pioneer novels.

*Connecticut Past and Present.* By Odell Shepard. Knopf. \$3.50.

Odell Shepard, author of *Pedlar's Progress*, has lived in Connecticut for twenty years and loves it as his own. Patriotism, he says, grows like a tree—from roots in one particular soil; give each American one center from which his love of country may radiate in concentric circles. He writes of prehistoric Connecticut: of Indian occupation, of Puritans, and of the changing present; of schools, crossroads, villages, cemeteries—and happily—of nature lore.

*American Folk Plays.* Edited by Frederick H. Koch. Appleton-Century. \$4.00.

Paul Green says of Koch, who is professor of dramatic literature at the University of North Carolina and founder and director of the Carolina Playmakers: "After all these years of campaigning in the dramatic wars, I say hail to the leader." The Introduction discusses "American Folk Drama in the Making." There are eighteen plays from the American scene, including "Nancy Hanks," "Bondwoman," and "Davy Crockett." Each author has written of his own people. The book affords an excellent panorama of a nation in the making and of simple human nature.

*The Antigone of Sophocles: An English Version.* By Dudley Fitts and Robert Fitzgerald. Harcourt. \$1.50.

The finest of the Greek plays presented in powerful English verse. A critical commentary is included.

*Sonnets from the Portuguese.* By Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Harper.

An attractive new edition of the *Sonnets* set up by hand in Goudy Medieval type.

#### FOR THE SCHOLAR

*The Year's Work in English Studies*, Vol. XVIII (1937). Edited for the English Association by Frederick S. Boas and Mary S. Serjeantson. Oxford University Press. \$3.75.

Notices of 237 books and 954 articles on literary history and criticism and philology in general and the various periods of English literature from Anglo-Saxon times to the present. The items are conveniently classified and fully indexed.

*A Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles*, Part VIII: *Dewberry -Emporium*. Compiled at the University of Chicago under the editorship of Sir William A. Craigie and James R. Hulbert. University of Chicago Press. \$4.00.

The latest instalment of the historical *Dictionary of American English* being compiled by the co-editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary* and Professor Hulbert of the University of Chicago.

*Vassar Journal of Undergraduate Studies*, Vol. XII (May, 1939). Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

The articles of particular interest to the student of English language and literature are the "Conception of the Poetic Process in Wordsworth, Shelley, and Byron," by Dorothy Warner Bishop, and "The Dialectic Principle in *The Magic Mountain*," by Louise Wentworth Boynton. A useful survey of the labor-union movement among actors and other theater works, by Anna Sedgwick Minot, is unavoidably lacking in an account of recent fundamental changes in the theatrical union situation.

*The Early Theater in Eastern Iowa.* By Joseph S. Schick. University of Chicago Press. \$3.00.

A doctoral dissertation of interest as an illustration of the beginnings of culture in a typical midwestern frontier settlement. Fully half of the volume is devoted to a chrono-

logical list of all known theatrical performances and theatrical entertainments in the Davenport region during the quarter century before the Civil War.

*The Literature of the English Bible.* By Wilbur Owen Sypherd. Oxford University Press. \$2.00.

A brief, rather elementary, description of the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha intended to provide material for the intelligent reading and study of the Bible as a part of English literature. Some textual history is given, but the emphasis is upon the various types of literary structure, figures of speech, and the literary forms of the King James Version.

*Letters from Elizabeth Barrett to B. R. Haydon.* Edited by Martha Hale Shackford. Oxford University Press. \$2.00.

The first publication of eighteen autographed letters and three fragments of letters written by Elizabeth Barrett to B. R. Haydon, the painter and friend of Keats, in the period immediately preceding her acquaintance with Robert Browning. They are part of the collection given to Wellesley College in 1930 by Professor George Herbert Palmer. A lengthy and delightfully written Introduction supplies the background of the correspondence.

*Nick of the Woods or The Jibbenainosay.* By Robert Montgomery Bird. Edited, with Introduction, Chronology, and Bibliography by Cecil B. Williams. American Book. \$2.40.

Robert Montgomery Bird, the Philadelphia dramatist who turned novelist, shared with Cooper and Simms the popularization as fictional characters of the American Indian and the pioneer. In this reprinting of "The Tale of Kentucky," ably edited and illustrated with manuscript notations and early maps, Professor Williams discusses the historical authenticity and the literary merits of Bird's most important novel.

*The Poet's Work.* By John Holmes. Oxford University Press. \$2.00.

Passages dealing with the poet's words, the poet's knowledge, the poet's difficulties, the poet's world, and the poet's nature, taken from the writings of well-known authors and critics, have been assembled and interpreted by a young New England poet.

*Induction to Tragedy.* By Howard Baker. Louisiana State University Press. \$2.75.

A study of the evolution of early English dramatic tragedy with respect to form and structure. *Gorboduc*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, and *Titus Andronicus* are used as type studies.

*Catullus in Strange and Distant Britain.* By James A. S. McPeck. Harvard University Press. \$5.00.

The influence of the great Roman lyric poet upon the work of English writers from Thomas to Pope, as his writings slowly changed from an alien quality in English literature to an indistinguishable part of the English literary tradition, is here described in satisfying detail. Copious notes inserted at the end supply the documentary evidence for many of Mr. McPeck's observations.



## FOR THE COLLEGE STUDENT

*Studies in Prose.* By Guy Steffan, Madeleine Doran, and Hoyt Trowbridge. Farrar & Rinehart. \$1.00.

These brief prose passages are offered not simply for reading but for close analysis. Each of them is followed by detailed questions concerning the author's intention and technique, including his handling of the problems of vocabulary, sentence structure, and paragraph development.

*Writing Your Novel: A Functional Analysis of Narrative Technique.* By Garland Ethel. Portland, Ore.: Scholastic Press.

A lucid exposition of the philosophy of the novel and an analysis of its technique. The treatment is broad in scope and related to the larger problems of human nature and human environment and the place of art and literature in human experience.

*The College Book of Essays.* By John Abbot Clark. Henry Holt. \$2.00.

Mr. Clark presents, without editorial interruption, a wealth of sophisticated, sometimes serious, prose taken chiefly from modern sources, although such ancients as Plato and Horace are made to sit around the table with Heywood Broun and Robert Maynard Hutchins.

*The Revised College Omnibus.* Edited by James Dow McCallum, in collaboration with Marston Balch, Ralph P. Boas, Percy Marks, Benfield Pressey, and Louis Untermeyer. Harcourt. 2.75.

These more than 1,200 closely-printed but readable pages contain essays on college life, language, literature, and culture, and the international crisis, a full-length biography (Strachey's *Queen Victoria*), a dozen of the best English and American short stories, the complete text of Hardy's *Return of the Native*, four full-length dramas, and a section of English and American poetry—the former predominantly nineteenth century and the latter contemporary.

*Modern English Readings.* Edited by Roger Sherman Loomis and Donald Lemen Clark. 3d ed. Farrar & Rinehart. \$2.75.

In this extraordinary variety of literary models in both prose and poetry the college student finds opportunity for literary enjoyment, stimulation to social action, and guidance in imaginative or informative writing. In making these selections the authors have been keenly aware of the shifting intellectual currents of our own time without neglecting the great writers of other ages.

*The College Book of Essays.* Edited by James Dow McCallum. Harcourt. \$1.25.

This volume corresponds to the first 283 pages of the *Revised College Omnibus*, also edited by James Dow McCallum and described elsewhere in this section.

*Learning To Write in College.* By Reed Smith. Little, Brown. \$2.00.

A standard college text on the problems of writing with major emphasis on the fundamentals of grammar and sentence structure and the building of a large functioning vocabulary. The principles of good writing are illustrated not only by illustrations from the classics but also by numerous examples of student-writing from universities and colleges all over the United States. Recent scholarly sources furnished the bases for the discussions of current usage.

*Essay Annual, 1939.* By Erich A. Walter. Scott, Foresman. \$1.25.

Professor Walter has again selected some of the most readable and colorful essays from the periodical literature of 1939 to illustrate for college students the various types of effective prose. The range of themes is wide—including people, times and places, the outdoors, education, the critical world, science, language and press, humor, and society and politics—although on controversial issues the editorial bias has noticeably influenced the selection.

## Daily Drills for Better English

By Edward Harlan Webster

**REVISED  
AND  
ENLARGED  
EDITION**

•  
**JUST PUBLISHED  
FOR USE IN  
HIGH SCHOOLS  
COLLEGES  
NORMAL SCHOOLS**

**N**OW ready—a revision of this tried and constructive program for mastery of effective English, with content in line with modern ideas of acceptable usage. The student is enabled by diagnostic tests to examine himself, by setting up exercises to drill himself in correct constructions, by practice exercises to train himself in selecting the right construction, and by self-measurement tests to determine his language growth and what remedial measures are still needed. Through the use of abundant practice exercises, the student develops correct speech habits that become second nature. Exercises, drills, and tests are planned to make the ear as well as the eye sensitive to correct modern usage.

**World Book Company, Publishers**

Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York

2126 Prairie Avenue, Chicago

### Use Next Term

Readings selected on the basis of successful use in English courses in outstanding universities—Harvard, Wisconsin, Iowa—full of contemporary meaning, straightforward about controversial issues, literary, social, individual.

Write for

Complete Contents

### FIVE KINDS OF WRITING

Selections from British and American authors, old and new: descriptive, critical, historical, narrative, poetical.

Edited by Theodore Morrison and Others. \$2.50

### AN EXPOSITION WORKSHOP

Readings in modern controversy—science versus propaganda, present and historical opinion, political, dramatic, and literary criticism.

Edited by Simpson, Brown, and Stegner. \$2.00

### THE STORY WORKSHOP

Twenty-six stories implemented with notes, biographical sketches, and introductions on writing the short story.

Edited by Wilbur L. Schramm. \$1.75

LITTLE, BROWN & CO.

PUBLISHERS, BOSTON



## SPELLING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR COLLEGE FRESHMAN LEVEL

By DOCTOR WALTER SCRIBNER GUILER

*Miami University, Oxford, Ohio*

Scientifically developed—List of 1,000 words of highest F/D product taken from the 5,000 words most commonly used.

Individualized in Plan—Spare-time assignment making it possible to get spelling without interruption of other work.

A program that accomplishes desired ends in spelling. Students show keen interest in spelling—spelling consciousness results.

TITLE: REMEDIAL SPELLING, consisting of  
STUDY BOOK and TEST BOOK

PRICE: 48 cents list per unit, subject to usual discount with transportation extra.

### HARRISON & COMPANY

50 West Broad Street

Columbus, Ohio